

Canada Co-operatives Association Bill

competition between committees as to where bills should go, but I do want to point out—

Mr. Baldwin: Why not the External Affairs Committee?

Mr. Basford: It could well go to the Committee on External Affairs as suggested by the House Leader for the opposition. If he had been listening to the debate he would have learned about the great contribution the co-operative movement has made to developing countries. This would be a matter of very great concern and interest to the External Affairs Committee.

We all know that in this House it is the party whips, of whom there are four, who determine the membership of committees. I hope this bill will be referred to the committee on Justice and Legal Affairs. If the official opposition whip wants to change the party membership on the committee in order to have some members with expertise in the co-operative movement on the committee, he is free to make that change. To effect such a change, all a party whip has to do is table a piece of paper. This applies to the NDP, the Ralliement Cr ditiste and the government party.

We have to select the committee for the bill to go to. I feel the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs is a good one. Let me point out that last spring that committee dealt very expeditiously with a bill proposing a change in the Bills of Exchange Act which came into effect yesterday, November 1. This has changed the rights of every consumer who has signed a time-payment contract. I think that committee can deal expeditiously and equitably with Bill C-177. If there are any problems about the membership on the committee from the opposition's point of view, then the whips should change the membership on the committee.

● (9:10 p.m.)

I want to make only one other point before I sit down. It is with reference to some remarks by the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) who suggested that the co-operative movement may well have some amendments to suggest to the bill. That movement may very well have such amendments to propose. We have tried to consult them. We have had working on this question various lawyers who are expert in advising the co-operative movement.

We hope the bill meets generally the wishes of those who are involved in the co-operative movement, concerning the kind of general legislation we should have at the federal level to govern the incorporation and operation of co-operatives. No bill is perfect and the government does not suggest that this bill is perfect. Every bill can be improved. I am not the judge, nor do I govern the committee; therefore, I do not know whether or not the Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs will call witnesses.

I would hope that I, as the sponsor of the bill, would not be surprised by any amendments which might be brought forward. If people have amendments and

[Mr. Basford.]

changes to suggest in respect of the bill, concerning how it might be improved in any way—I hesitate to suggest this would be probable, knowing those who drew up the bill, but possibly it can be improved—I would ask, as I think anyone sponsoring a bill must ask, for sufficient time to consider such changes so that we are not taken by surprise.

For example, there are very complicated constitutional issues involved in this bill. If there should be suggested changes which involve these constitutional issues, we should have time to consult the law officers of the Crown and consider whether as a government we can accept or reject them. So I would go along with the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre in respect of his suggestion that there may be improvements which could be made to the bill.

I do not know whether the committee will hold public hearings. That is up to the chairman and the members of the committee. However, if changes are to be suggested, or if improvements are to be made, I hope those changes and improvements will be discussed with me and my officers so that we will not be taken by surprise and will have time to consider them carefully and in depth to determine whether we should accept them.

With these remarks I commend this bill to the House and the committee with the confidence, unlike the feeling of some members of the opposition, that it will be dealt with equitably and expeditiously.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

* * *

FARM PRODUCTS MARKETING AGENCIES BILL

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL MARKETING COUNCIL AND AGENCIES

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture) moved that Bill C-176, to establish the National Farm Products Marketing Council and to authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-176 to establish a National Farm Products Marketing Council and, hopefully, marketing agencies is essentially the same—indeed, almost exactly the same—as the bill that was considered by this House during the last session. Then, of course, it was Bill C-197.

A great deal of discussion took place during the last session concerning this new departure in respect of federal government legislation. For a number of reasons I do not intend to repeat the arguments advanced during those debates in this House and, indeed, in the Standing Committee on Agriculture during the last session. However, there have been some very useful discussions—and I appreciate the discussions I have had with spokesmen of all parties in this House—concerning the need that is