

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS MARKETING BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. Wishart McL. Robertson moved the second reading of Bill 82, an Act to provide for the Marketing of Agricultural Products in Interprovincial and Export Trade.

He said: Honourable senators, I have asked the honourable senator from Kennebec (Hon. Mr. Vaillancourt) to explain this bill.

Hon. Cyrille Vaillancourt: Honourable senators, most of the provinces have marketing legislation under which producers of farm products can organize marketing boards which, with the approval of the majority of the registered producers, can control the marketing of the commodities concerned. Examples of boards of this type are the Nova Scotia Apple Marketing Board, the British Columbia Tree Fruit board, the Ontario Bean Growers Marketing Board and the New Brunswick Cheese Marketing Board.

Operation of a board set up under provincial legislation is at present limited to its own province. In some cases this greatly restricts the ability of the board to control the sale of the product, because some of the product may have to be marketed outside the province or outside the country. This measure is intended to enable the Governor in Council to grant to provincial marketing boards the same powers in relation to interprovincial and export trade that under provincial legislation they enjoy in connection with trade within their respective provinces. Such grants of authority may, of course, be revoked by the Governor in Council.

One advantage which provincial marketing boards hope to gain from this legislation is the legal authority to collaborate with one another in regulating the marketing of commodities—apples, for example—on markets anywhere in Canada or abroad.

Hon. John T. Haig: Honourable senators, the party to which I belong is not opposed to this bill. In fact, a measure of this kind was one of the planks in the platform adopted by the national convention of our party in October last. In Manitoba, as in the other provinces, I presume there are various agricultural marketing boards, for example, a honey co-operative. These boards have been regulating the marketing of their respective products within the province, and this bill would enable them to regulate the marketing throughout Canada and in foreign countries. I approve of the measure.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: There is a question I should like to ask, and perhaps the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) may be able to answer it. Under our constitutional system

is there or has there been anything to prevent an organization in one province from distributing or selling its products in any other part of Canada?

Hon. Mr. Haig: I do not think that provincial organizations could carry on interprovincial trade, unless authorized by some such measure as this, for interprovincial trade is a matter within Dominion jurisdiction. I know that the honey co-operative of Manitoba is desirous of having the bill passed. In Manitoba we have had a hot dispute as to whether oats and barley should be handled by the Wheat Board or by a producers' board, and the people of the province are violently divided on the issue. I am one of those who favour a producers' board, especially when the product in question is marketed largely throughout the whole country.

There is no question that any board which was given authority under section 2 of this bill would have power to regulate the marketing of its products anywhere in Canada. I have not looked into the question raised by the honourable senator from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert), and so am unable to give a direct answer to him, but I would say that if I were the legal representative of an agricultural marketing board in any province I would favour this measure.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: I do not wish to detain the house. My purpose is simply to obtain information, and I am not sure whether the bill is to be referred to a committee. Perhaps there will not be time for that.

Hon. Mr. Haig: No, there will not be time.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: I judge that the bill is a form of enabling legislation.

Hon. Mr. Haig: That is what it is.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: It would enable the Governor in Council to grant authority to marketing boards set up under provincial laws. There is nothing new in that idea, and the problem which the bill is supposed to deal with was considered at length and handled decisively some fifteen years ago when another administration was in office. At that time marketing boards for all the provinces were suggested. Some objection was then taken to that plan by those who are favourable to it now, so it would appear that opinion does change over the years.

I think there is good ground for analyzing and examining the purposes of this bill, in order that we may be satisfied that the benefits expected to accrue from it will have some prospect of being realized. From year to year some provinces will have surpluses of certain products. For instance, the province of Alberta might conceivably have a