

Agricultural Products Act

Mr. Michaud: I read Bill No. 82, which is quite short, and also the draft bill presented a couple of years ago by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which was quite a long bill. I hope this short bill will meet the situation. In my remarks on March 10 I referred to a statement that had been made by the minister early in August to the effect that he was in favour of a marketing board to market our potatoes in the maritimes. I read that in the local paper. I have not the paper here, but I have a good memory. The statement was made at the time of the Liberal convention and in the program advocated by the minister there was something about potato marketing, which I was pleased to see.

Mr. Gardiner: I hope the hon. member can find that and show it to me because I have no recollection of ever having said any such thing and I am quite sure that I put it in no program.

Mr. Knowles: The minister was talking about spark plugs at the time of the convention.

Mr. Michaud: I saw it in the papers at the time and I certainly did not expect the minister to contradict me.

Mr. Gardiner: That does not necessarily mean that you will not get a board.

Mr. Michaud: I am content to leave it at that. I would ask the minister and his officials to look at what I said on March 10 with regard to the marketing of our potatoes. I discussed Bill No. 82 with the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton the other day and we agreed that it would not meet our situation. I feel that we need something more specific because this is a particular marketing problem. I hope the minister will look into it again and let us know if the government are going to do anything about this serious problem. I shall have occasion to bring it up again. I do not want to go into details now because it is questionable whether it would be in order. I am bringing these facts to the attention of the minister because he is in his seat now and when I spoke two weeks ago he was not.

Mr. Hackett: The doctrine of national emergency enunciated by the Minister of Justice this morning when speaking for the government would seem to imperil all provincial and civil rights guaranteed by the constitution. Moreover, its doctrine of amendment places all minority rights within the power of a parliamentary majority, not only to suspend but to abrogate. That would seem to follow necessarily from the attitude taken by the government in the Nolan case. Counsel

[Mr. Gardiner.]

for the government set forth the government's views in these terms:

If the act is within the powers of parliament because there is a national emergency, no matter what that emergency may be, the court might not inquire if the order in council were valid.

The consequence of the government's policy seems inescapable: not only are civil and provincial rights at the mercy of a mere parliamentary majority at any time that the government declares that there exists an emergency, but also that under the doctrine of amendment minority rights are also at the mercy of a mere parliamentary majority. I think it is well that these facts be stated, and possibly restated, in order that all hon. members may appreciate to the full their responsibility of giving support to this resolution.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at seven-thirty o'clock.

Resolution reported, read the second time and concurred in. Mr. Gardiner thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 126, to amend the Agricultural Products Act.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

Mr. Charlton: I contend that this bill should have been called the agricultural products price control bill instead of the agricultural products bill, because it has had a considerable bearing on the price control policy that the government has followed both in the war years and since. I should like to deal for a moment with a statement made by the Minister of Finance today.

Mr. Gardiner: I should like to move second reading of the bill, if the hon. member does not mind. We are on the second reading. We are out of committee.

Mr. Bentley: Can the bill be distributed?

Mr. Gardiner: It is only one section.

Mr. Bentley: You had better read it at least.

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I move the second reading of the bill.

I want to be able to make a speech on this bill some time. Most of the speeches made on it so far have been made by the opposition. The bill itself is a very short one, having only one section. That section is to the effect that the legislation which was passed and assented to on May 14, 1947, be