

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Gardiner: It was not very long ago that it was discontinued. I hope I did not give the impression that it was very soon after the ward. I am not sure of the year, but I think it was about three years ago. It was at the time I went to Regina and addressed the dairy association there. We discussed the whole question there at that time. The cheese had come in just prior to that. The old understanding had been discontinued, and then right after that experience discussions took place again between our people and the people in New Zealand and an understanding was reached, and it has been continued down to the present.

Mr. Nesbitt: That just about pins it down. The reason I asked the question about the time is that, it was in January, 1955, and again in 1956 that the Minister of Trade and Commerce informed us there was no agreement, so I presume it has come up since that time.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, I wish to agree with those who have remarked that they are hopeful the government at this session will bring in an amendment to the Agricultural Products Co-operative Marketing Act or any other appropriate acts in order to strengthen the position of producer marketing boards across this country. Action by the government is required because of the important and far-reaching decision made recently by the Supreme Court of Canada to the effect that producer marketing boards may not in the future deduct from producers' prices for their products money for the purpose of setting up reserves or for the purpose of equalizing payments among producers.

I think it is fair to say that hon. members of this house in all parties are sympathetic to the idea of producer marketing boards, and I believe the proper functioning of such boards is extremely important to the operation of the Agricultural Prices Support Act. The minister should impress on his colleagues the great necessity of satisfying the legitimate requests of the producers of this country that such necessary amendments be presented to parliament at this session, or that appropriate action be taken in order that producer marketing boards may continue to function in the interests of producers themselves and in the interests of orderly marketing.

If the minister is in a position to add to the remarks he made at the opening of today's sitting I would appreciate any comment he might offer. However, I am not endeavouring to put him on a spot if a decision has not been reached. Certainly we in this group are hopeful that such action will be taken,

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

and I think I can give the minister the assurance that even though this session may not have many days to run we shall expedite whatever amendment or amendments to any act may be brought forward by the government in order to meet the decision of the supreme court, or such amendments as the producer organizations may suggest.

Mr. Charlton: Mr. Chairman, did I hear the minister correctly when he said there was a floor price under cheese?

Mr. Gardiner: Yes, you are correct; in Ontario.

Mr. Charlton: Ah, yes. Cheese has never been under the Agricultural Prices Support Act; is that not right?

Mr. Gardiner: I will look and make sure.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gardiner: Cheddar cheese; \$155,348.82 under that act.

Mr. Charlton: What year was that?

Mr. Gardiner: It existed from 1949 to 1953.

Mr. Charlton: If that is the case, Mr. Chairman, why should the Minister of Trade and Commerce have implied there was no import permit necessary? Is it not true that any product which is under the Agricultural Prices Support Act automatically comes under the Export and Import Permits Act?

Mr. Gardiner: Not automatically.

Mr. Charlton: Is the minister sure of that?

Mr. Gardiner: Yes.

Mr. Charlton: My understanding is that any product supported under the Agricultural Prices Support Act is automatically under the Export and Import Permits Act.

Mr. Gardiner: It may come under it.

Mr. Charlton: Well, now, let us get this straight. Is it or is it not a fact that any product supported under the Agricultural Prices Support Act automatically comes under the Export and Import Permits Act?

Mr. Gardiner: I do not think so, but I am not a lawyer and I might be wrong.

Mr. Brooks: Lawyers are never wrong.

Mr. Charlton: I was under the impression that it was so. I may be wrong, but I would like to have that matter cleared up.

Mr. Gardiner: I just found out this morning that it was not.

Mr. Fleming: Under what circumstances did you find out?