

*Agricultural Products Board*

minister when he replies to answer questions such as those which are of interest to the farmers and are also of equal interest to the consumers who today, because they do not know the facts, too often place the responsibility for high food prices on the farmers and on agriculture in general, where it does not belong, instead of placing it upon those distributors who apparently are able to maintain their prices regardless of the fall in the price of raw products.

**Mr. Robert Fair (Battle River):** Mr. Speaker, I make no apology for taking just a few minutes of the time of the house, and I may say that it will be just a few minutes because I believe that my stand in connection with the plight of the farmers of Canada is by this time well known. It must be because of the approach of Christmas, and of the good feelings being enjoyed by hon. members here, that we had the genial, good-natured hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Stuart) come into the house and make the confession he made, admitting that the fishermen in his constituency and in other sections of the country are not making expenses. I feel that this is a terrible admission for the genial member to make. We have heard little in this house from the representatives of the fishing communities. I want to tell the hon. member that if he presents a case showing the need of the fishermen, he will certainly have the support of every member in this group. We realize that these men have suffered, and that they are not receiving a fair return for their labour. As I have said, the hon. member will have our support if he presents a case for these fishermen. He has said that too much of the time of the house is taken up by farmers pleading their case and looking for something. Just as soon as our farmers receive justice, then we shall not take up any more of the time of the house. We shall devote some of our time to rectifying the wrongs inflicted on other sections of the country. While injustices are inflicted upon our people, then it is our responsibility to plead their case, and to continue to plead it until those wrongs are put right.

The farmers of this country have been asked to increase production. If they do so they find themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea. I say that because if they increase production there is no formula in our Agricultural Prices Support Act to enable the government to support prices, so prices fall. If the farmers do happen to make a few dollars profit, then the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) demands taxes, which in some cases he does not need, and we find the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) chasing these farmers to the ends

of the earth to extract the last dollar. Many of the most prominent farmers in my constituency have said that, until we have a policy which gives the farmers justice, they are not going to produce on an all-out basis. We can hardly blame them for taking that attitude. Production in Canada this year is supposed to be very high, but included in the payments to farmers this year will be payments that have been owing to them since 1945. I hope the statisticians will not neglect to take that into consideration when arriving at their figures.

According to the best information we can obtain from the dominion bureau of statistics, in 1950 the 23 per cent of Canada's population on the land received only 9.95 per cent of the national income. I believe the farmers work longer hours and work harder than any other occupational group in Canada, so how does the government justify the fact that 23 per cent of the population received only 9.95 per cent of the national income? Yet at this date the government still refuses to put any formula into the Agricultural Prices Support Act which would enable farmers to receive what they are entitled to receive. Although the ruling of Mr. Speaker prevents us from holding up this legislation, so far as I am concerned I have no desire to hold up the legislation, I want to see it passed because it goes hand in hand with the Agricultural Prices Support Act. While saying that, I do want the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) to introduce an amendment to the Agricultural Prices Support Act at this session, placing in that act a formula in line with the statement he made on the resolution stage, that farmers should at least receive prices bearing the same relationship as those they received in the 1943-45 period. In my opinion that will not give them a proper percentage of the national income, but it will at least ensure that they shall not be fleeced as they were in the thirties when wicked men brought about that depression, which many would like to see again.

**Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):** I refrained from speaking on the resolution stage of this bill, Mr. Speaker, because I understood the minister was leaving that evening and desired the passage of the resolution by ten o'clock. This is an extremely important matter to quite a number of my farmer constituents. This is the first opportunity I have had to say a few words on this bill, and I intend to take advantage of the opportunity whether or not some members of the house like it.