

*Food Agreements*

Mr. COLDWELL: Our whip knows nothing about it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I did not know anything about it.

Mr. COLDWELL: This was done last year, you know, at the same time.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

On motion of Mr. Mackenzie King the house adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

## Tuesday, March 19, 1946.

The house met at three o'clock.

### FOOD

#### AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM— SUBSIDIES ON FARM PRODUCTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. C. SENN (Haldimand): I wish to ask a question of the Minister of Agriculture, and possibly also of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. According to newspaper reports these two gentlemen visited Great Britain a short time ago for the purpose of making contracts and perhaps agreements for Canadian food products. Will they, at as early a date as possible, acquaint the house with any contracts or agreements that have been entered into, as well as the terms of those agreements and the prices to be obtained for the products?

Hon. J. G. GARDINER (Minister of Agriculture): The agreements that were under discussion while we were overseas are still being discussed by the British government and this government. We have an understanding with the British government that no announcement shall be made here until forty-eight hours after the agreement is finally signed, the object being that they may have an opportunity of making an announcement to their house at the same time as it is made here. The exact date of the announcement will have to be left, therefore, until such time as the decision is finally made.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Will hon. gentlemen please speak louder? We cannot hear them at all.

Mr. SENN: May I point out to the minister that seeding operations will soon begin and that this is really the breeding season for live stock. I suggest that the announcement should be made at as early a date as possible.

Mr. GARDINER: I expect it will be made before the end of the week, but I do not want to be too definite about that.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

[Later:]

Mr. GARDINER: I think I should supplement the answer I gave a moment ago to the hon. member for Haldimand. The suggestion was made that before seeding takes place, farmers should know what the prices are to be for this season's production. I may say that an announcement was made a year ago last fall and it has a bearing on some of the discussions that have been taking place in the house. The contracts which covered this year's food products were on a two-year basis and were made in the fall and winter preceding last winter. There is no intention on the part of the government to have these lowered this year. The price for delivered bacon was established down to December 31, 1946, and on cheese and milk down to the spring of 1947. Those prices are still before the farmers, and they have some knowledge of what their floor returns at least will be. When I speak of "floor returns" I include both subsidies as well as prices.

Mr. SENN: May I point out, Mr. Speaker, that a large proportion of the grain produced this year will not be marketed for another year, and therefore a new contract will be needed.

Mr. WRIGHT: I should like to ask a supplementary question based on the minister's last statement. Does that mean no further farm subsidies will be taken off farm products during the coming year?

Mr. GARDINER: There may be an adjustment of the returns that have been given to farmers, but that will be announced in due course. What I am saying is that the farmer was given assurance a year ago last fall that he would have a certain return for the year 1946, and I do not think anyone has in contemplation a downward revision of those returns. What I wanted to make definitely understood was that the farmer can, as he has been able to do ever since the war started, anticipate what his returns are going to be for the year that he is seeding the crop.

Mr. McCULLOUGH (Assiniboia): May I be permitted to ask an additional question in regard to barley and the policy of the government in regard thereto? In the west we find that there is a definite move to cut down barley production. Will the minister make a statement as to the barley policy for this year?

Mr. GARDINER: I have made so many statements on that point that I do not suppose it will do any harm to make another one. I have consistently and persistently stated that