

am sure, though, that he will not be flattered to know that we were thinking along the same line.

**Hon. Mr. Roebuck:** I am deeply flattered.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** I was going to ask what would happen if the government got a lot of butter on hand and could not sell it. Of course, the answer is obvious. The government would have to "take a beating." It would have to pass an Order in Council authorizing sale of the butter at whatever price could be obtained for it on the market. After all, butter can only be held for a certain length of time. After that the quality deteriorates, and I for one would not want it. The peculiar thing about this bill is that it would make it impossible for a farmer to sell his butter at 50 cents, even if he wished to do so. He would find himself confronted with the fixed price.

**Hon. Mr. Lambert:** Why not describe this bill as the "Agricultural products price maintenance bill"?

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** That would be a good title, because that is just what it amounts to. In a day or two we shall have before us a bill aimed at making it illegal for a manufacturer to fix a retail price for the sale of his goods.

As a Canadian from the Western provinces, where we depend largely on the products of agriculture, I know that our farmers would be glad to have a fixed price for their products. In the spring the farmer sows his grain, and the thing that worries him is whether he will really ever harvest a crop at all, and, if so, whether the price will be high enough to pay him for his labour and operating costs. In this house we sometimes hear of the gamble that is taken by a man in business who purchases stock or orders his factory to produce a certain quantity of goods. But that is nothing to the gamble that the farmer takes. Out in our province—and I presume the farmer in every other province takes just as big a gamble. He risks all his year's activities on the one crop, and if it cannot be harvested, or if after being harvested it cannot be sold, he loses everything. That has been the problem faced by the farmers as far back as I can remember, when I was a boy of six or seven.

The man who produces hogs or cattle has the same kind of problem. When a calf is dropped in the spring he has to decide whether it will be worth while to raise the animal in the hope of selling it at a profit when it is two or three years old. He gambles on getting back at that time the cost of maintaining the animal. That kind of thing has always been a bugbear to all farmers,

and I can understand why they would favour the establishment of minimum prices for their products. As Canadians we believe that the world market for everything should be free and open, but this legislation illustrates a fact that fundamentally we all know namely, that farmers need some stability of prices for their products.

I am not opposing the bill. I realize that we must have something like this in order to support the farming community in our dominion. I hope my honourable friend from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin) will pardon my use of that word. I mean to indicate the country as a whole, as distinct from the provinces; but so as not to hurt his feelings I will say "in our Canada."

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** It does not sound right.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** We were brought up in too early a school. I will put it this way: "in our country." Everybody in our country wants to support the primary producer and give him a chance to obtain a reasonable return for the labour and capital that he puts into his products.

**Hon. Mr. Paterson:** May I ask the honourable gentleman a question? If the Wheat Board sells wheat at the same price to all millers—to Ogilvie, Lake of the Woods, and Robin Hood—all of them will have to sell their flour at the same price. If they do, will they then be guilty of an offence?

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** The senator from Thunder Bay flatters me by asking for a legal opinion on that point. I should say that if the committee on combines could go to work on that matter they would conclude that quite a combine existed there. The Wheat Board compels millers to sell their wheat at the one price. True, they are not obliged to do that by law, but any miller who raised his price above that of the others would not be able to sell his flour. I think this legislation is alright for farmers. What I have to say about the bill which would prohibit manufacturers from maintaining retail prices, I shall reserve till that bill comes before us.

**Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck:** Honourable senators, this bill has just reached us, and I do not know anything about it beyond what was stated by the leader (Hon. Mr. Robertson). I do not know that I have a settled opinion on it, but I view it with considerable doubt. It is proposed to give to the government power to engage in the buying and selling of agricultural products. At first blush that does not seem to me a proper function of government. It is so different from the kind of civilization into which I was born, where private individuals carried on the business of