

with much better results than otherwise would have been the case. Then the government has added to those returns by means of subsidies in certain cases, with which I am not going to deal at the moment. But now I come to the point which has been up for discussion year after year. It was brought before us to-day by the farm federation; it has been brought up in this house by a number of hon. members since the session opened, as it has been brought up continuously throughout the country. I refer to the demand for parity prices on farm products. No one has ever contended that we have parity prices on grains in Canada as compared with any other period that may be used as a basis. Those in this country who first asked for parity prices on farm products said that what they meant by parity was the same purchasing power for what was received for the product in the year in question as prevailed on the average during the period from 1926 to 1929. Recently that has been changed to some extent; some are saying that because we have taken as the basis of the wage position the highest wage in 1926-29 we ought to take the highest price in 1926-29 for farm products. But may I read the basis on which we have discussed this question year after year:

Parity definition: Parity price is the price of the commodity which will give a purchasing power with respect to articles the farmer buys equivalent to the purchasing power of such commodity in the base period.

The base period we have taken in working out the figures I am going to place upon *Hansard* is 1926-29, and the figure is the average figure for that period. On wheat we are down 54.5 cents; on oats we are down 9 cents; on barley we are down 12.2 cents, and on rye we are down 38.5 cents. I come now to flax, on which we are 25.5 cents up. On butter we are .4 cents up; on cheese, 6.1 cents up; on eggs 1.3 cents down; on steers, .24 cents up, and on hogs, .67 cents up. In other words, on all animal and poultry products listed here, with the exception of eggs, we are, on the basis I have just suggested, above parity. This means that for flaxseed we are 112.8 per cent of parity; on butter, 101.2 per cent; on cheese, 133.2 per cent; on eggs, 86.6 per cent; on steers, 116.93 per cent, and on hogs, 105.92 per cent. Let me repeat that some of those coming before us now would dispute the fact that we have parity prices because they have somewhat shifted the basic position. In fact, some contend that they at no time took any other position but that we should start with the highest price during that period, and of course if you

[Mr. Gardiner.]

start with the highest price it means that on all live-stock products, I think, with the exception of cheese, we shall be slightly below parity.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Has the minister the average for the entire group of commodities?

Mr. GARDINER: No, I have not, but it can be worked out from these figures.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that those of us who have been speaking on agriculture have been emphasizing the necessity for increased labour during the coming year. I am going to repeat that I have not been convinced by any arguments I have heard in the house, nor am I convinced by our experiences of the past, that we cannot reach the objectives which we have placed before the farmers of this country for this fourth year of war. There is a possibility, however, that we may not reach those objectives, and I wish to emphasize that if we do not do so, it will not necessarily mean that we have not done everything possible in Canada to help win the war. At some period we shall reach the time, on account of either lack of feed, lack of proper weather conditions, lack of labour, or lack of all three, when we shall be producing everything we possibly can produce, with the facilities that are available to us for the production of food products. And when we are doing that, in so far as food is concerned we are holding our end in the war activities.

In the first year of the war—the first six months of the war—we were piling up surpluses which no one wanted for the time being. Then, when France fell, we found ourselves in the position where these surpluses were useful. We have gone on producing more and more every year. And for every ton we produced we could find some use, with the exception, of course, of some of the products I enumerated earlier in my speech. They are not the most important food products we are producing in this country. Again, of course I must make an exception of wheat.

We now hope that we are at a time when our armed forces in the field, and those of our allies, can be equipped and supplied with munitions. Probably there is some reason for thinking that, with the support of all the great allied powers, and all their industry, there is reason for placing greater emphasis upon production on the farms than we have been placing during the second and third years of the war. The government has put out directions on farm labour as an indication that it believed that such a time had come when the regulations were put out in March.