

hope to have the board operate successfully. In one section of the act it is provided that the board may set prescribed prices for agricultural products and may pay to the producers the difference between those prescribed prices and the average prices at which products may have sold during a given period of time. That may mean a different floor price to different people who are selling a particular product.

Mr. WEIR: A different price?

Mr. GARDINER: Depending on where they are living.

Mr. WRIGHT: Depending upon when they sell and where they are living. Take peas in eastern Ontario as an example. When they go to the market in the fall, let us say, they sell for \$2 per bushel. Later on they may go to \$4 per bushel and the government may prescribe a price which they consider to be fair of \$3.50 per bushel. They will take the average price between \$2 and \$4 and pay to the producer the difference between the prescribed price and the average price, and some producers who have sold these peas for the prescribed price will receive that difference. That is just an illustration. I do not think the act can work in a speculative market. It is only when commodity boards or co-operatives have control of their own product and pay the average price for the whole season that a government board can operate equitably to all who are producing that particular product.

There are other sections of the bill which I believe should be amended, and we of this group propose to move certain amendments as the sections are reached.

With regard to the export of agricultural products, I understand that this board is to take the surplus off the market and that it may export the surplus to any part of the world where it can find a market. The fund that is to be set up will therefore be a fund which will to a certain extent be used to subsidize the export of the surplus products, I am wondering whether it will be used to subsidize not only their export, but also the home market as between different seasons of the year.

A great many questions arise in one's mind as one reads the bill. The bill may mean very much or it may mean very little. Whether it will be successful or not depends entirely on the attitude of the government which may be putting the act into force. I would suggest that in the past the old-line parties in this house have not been any too favourable in their attitude towards agriculture. Otherwise

we would not have found agriculture in the position in which it was when the war started. Agriculture was the lowest paid group in the Canadian economy when the war broke out, and nobody denies that. It has only been within the last two years that our farmers, largely through the efforts of their own organizations, have been able to force this government to raise the prices of agricultural products to a point where they are anywhere near to being on an equitable footing with the other economic groups in this country. I suggest that the people of this country take that into consideration so that when they are given an opportunity they take care to see that a government is put into power which will express their viewpoint and see that this act is sympathetically considered and given a sympathetic administration.

Mr. HUGHES CLEAVER (Halton): Mr. Speaker, the measure we are now discussing is a bill to secure floor prices for farmers during the transition period after the war. While I am not a farmer, I have lived in a farming community all my life and I believe I know quite a bit of the farm problem. I wish to direct the attention of the house in its consideration of this measure to one part of the farm problem which this measure does not directly touch upon, and which is that the over-all picture of the return to the farmer is not directly covered, nor is it intended to be covered, by this measure.

As I understand the measure as it has been explained by the minister, its purpose is to take care of the extraordinary conditions which will arise as to prices of individual farm products in the immediate post-war period, and it does not deal directly with the general farm picture. I want to say at once that the farmers of my riding with whom I have been in contact have been very greatly encouraged by a measure of this kind being introduced in the house because my farmers believe that it indicates that in the future scientific weapons or measures are to be used in facing up to the farm problem. I should like to express the hope that this bill when enacted will work so satisfactorily that we shall carry its principles into our peace-time economy, using it as a permanent instrument or weapon to see that agriculture will secure its fair share of the national income.

I do not want to be considered as a crepe hanger, but to my personal knowledge, looking back over the past forty years, the position of agriculture has been steadily deteriorating until it has now reached the point where you can buy a 100-acre or 200-acre farm in my riding for what it would cost to