

Agricultural Products Act

Mr. Gardiner: I have the figures here for all of them and I shall give them to you. I am not going to read them all because it will take too long, but I am going to give a summary of what they mean. I am not going to say anything about wheat and not very much about grain, because grain is up and down in accordance with the seasons, depending upon whether it rains or whether it does not, as everyone knows. One can easily take the year 1948 and compare it with the year 1947 with regard to some of these products and say that they are away down one year as compared with another, but I have them all here beginning with 1936 down to 1948.

Mr. Coldwell: Is it very long? Could it be put on *Hansard*?

Mr. Gardiner: It is about ten or twelve pages.

Mr. Knowles: Have mercy on the printers.

Mr. Gardiner: What I am going to say with regard to them in this. If anyone will take the trouble to examine these figures he will find that agricultural production never was higher in any ten years in the history of Canada than it has been in the ten years beginning with 1938 and coming down to 1948.

Mr. Fulton: That is an entirely different thing.

Mr. Gardiner: Yes, it is quite a different thing from comparing 1948 with 1947 and saying you are down on eggs and you are up on potatoes. That has little to do with the position of farmers in this country. It has very little to do with the situation when you take one year and compare it with the year before or the year after. But take the ten years—and after all these are the years some hon. gentlemen have been talking about, Mr. Speaker. They have been talking about the years since there were dealings between the government of Britain and the government of Canada for food. The first of those years was 1939, the year the war began. These contracts have continued down to 1948 and we still have some of these contracts in existence for 1949. Therefore these are the years about which we are talking. The argument not later than half an hour ago was that under dealings of this kind with the British, agriculture in this country had suffered. I am pointing out to you, Mr. Speaker, that the ten years during which that kind of dealing was in effect we had the highest production of farm products that this country has ever experienced.

So that method of trading has not done them any harm. There may have been other

things that may have done harm, but when you balance them one against the other you will find that the production—I am not speaking of the value of production; these figures are for pounds, bushels and tons of food—is higher in these ten years than at any other time. Perhaps I could take a few figures to give some indication of what has happened.

Much has been said in this discussion about barley. Back in 1938 we produced 102 million bushels in Canada. In 1948, which was not a good barley year, we produced 154 million bushels, an increase of a little over 50 per cent in 1948 as compared with the first year. If you run through these figures you will find that apart from the three years when we were paying for greater production of barley at so much per acre there was a great increase in the production in all other years right from 1937 down to 1948.

There is another thing that is important—domestic consumption. We consumed only 80 million bushels of what we produced back in 1938. The figures for 1948 are not yet complete, but we consumed some 143 million bushels in 1946 and 136 million bushels in 1947. In those years we were feeding practically all the barley we had. We were feeding it because we were producing more of other food products that are produced by the feeding of grain.

My hon. friend over here who grew a little rye for a year or two may be interested in knowing that we produced only 5 million bushels back in 1937; that we were up to 13 million bushels in 1940; up to 24 million bushels in 1942; that we then dropped back to 5 million bushels in 1945. Rye then went up to \$4 per bushel. Many people like the hon. member for Calgary East (Mr. Harkness) went into rye. They sowed rye in the fall of 1947 when it was worth \$4 per bushel, but they harvested that rye when it was worth only a little over \$1 per bushel.

Mr. Harkness: I got \$1.49.

Mr. Gardiner: The hon. member was lucky. He is a pretty good trader. But the fact is that the farmers who took that gamble raised the production of rye from 5,800,000 bushels in 1945 to 25,348,000 bushels in 1948. In other words, almost five times as many took a gamble on it in 1947 and 1948 as had been in rye back in 1945.

I am not going to boast about what those people did. They increased the production from 5 million bushels to 25 million bushels, but I venture to say that some of them are now taking the advice which we gave them a year and a half ago and are getting back into some other production that will be more useful in connection with our agriculture.