

Agricultural Prices Support Act

Mr. Murray (Cariboo): Cheese and dairy products. It might be well to think of developing some of these sources of trade when we are finding the markets of Europe so difficult to enter.

Mr. Gardiner: The Minister of Trade and Commerce is not here at the moment. He would have a much more intimate knowledge of the matter that has been raised than I have. I agree with most of what has been said tonight, that the best market for our Canadian products is in Canada. Right now we are getting higher prices for most of what we do sell in Canada than we could get anywhere else in the world. This applies to practically all animal products except beef cattle.

As long as the farmer can sell all that he produces in Canada, that is where he is going to sell especially when he can get more here than anywhere else. When we think he is not going to get enough, under this legislation we provide him with another three and a half cents per pound for Wiltshire sides and three cents per pound for cheese, partly by way of subsidy and partly by saying to the consumer in Canada that we would like him to pay it. With that help our farmer is getting higher prices than he could get elsewhere.

That is just what we said to him six years ago when this legislation was put on the statute books. We told him that we would help him to get better prices for staple products than he could get anywhere else, and he has been getting them. I suppose it may be argued that he has not been getting them long enough. I do not know, but up to now he is getting it. He is going to sell all he can in that market. In that regard may I say that we were doing a lot of talking a short time ago about the price of hogs. We have eaten 32 per cent more pork in the last two months than we ate in the same two months last year. We have eaten so much that the price of hogs today is just about at the floor price where it was last year when we were selling Wiltshire sides to Great Britain at \$36 a hundred. Because our own people are eating bacon at a higher price than it is now being sold to Great Britain we are not getting the bacon to send there at the present time. Just a fraction of what we had expected to send to Great Britain has gone over in the last two months. We are not so much concerned now as we were a little while ago about whether the 60 million pounds in the contract is going to be used up in the first six months. I say that in order to show that when you can sell hogs at the price we are selling them in Canada, when you can sell cheese at the price you are selling it in Canada, when you can sell butter at the price you are selling it in Canada, there is no use thinking about trying to sell them in China

[Mr. Murray (Cariboo).]

because the Chinese just do not pay that much for the food they eat even if they had the dollars to pay for it.

After you get through with Canada the second best market, provided they will let us into it, is the United States. That is proved by the fact that when I was out in Alberta the other day I warned them about the situation. I might say to my friend from Calgary West—and he is concerned about that country—that one of the reasons why I went out there was to point out to them that they are selling 500,000 head of cattle a year, and Saskatchewan is selling 400,000 head of cattle a year. By doing that for the last few years they have reduced the number of cattle on the farms by two million. If they keep on doing that for a few years longer we will be wondering where we are going to get our production. We will not be wondering what we are going to do to sell it. I was warning them against selling their cattle at that rate and putting in three million acres more wheat last year. I was warning them that they should not do that another year, that they should keep their cattle on the farms, that they should keep on feeding cattle and cut down on their wheat acreage.

I say that in order to point out that there is no way in which you can determine that you are going to sell products to a market that is not as good as the one to which you are selling them. There is no place else in the world where you will get a price for cattle that will cause our farmers to cut down their herds to the extent they are in order to sell cattle in the United States. When they started to do that they did not think they were going to have those prices for cattle long enough to cut down their herds. They thought they were going to get something for what they had carried over and then eventually come to a lower level, but they have not yet.

After we get by the United States, if we have anything left to sell to anyone, apart from the trade restrictions that are put on and the fact that people refuse to buy it, the best market is the British market. If after we get through supplying those three markets we have anything left certainly we start to hunt for other markets, but it is not very often we have much left. We are always prepared to sell our products anywhere in the world that we can sell them and get the same return for them as we can get anywhere else. We have our feelers out in every country in the world where products can be sold in order to get all the information we can. I repeat what I have repeated on a number of occasions—and I hope I will not start a discussion by saying it—that we are not experiencing any great difficulty in selling our surpluses. When I