

Agricultural Products Act

contract to sell the limited amount of beans we have in Canada, as compared with the total of British requirements. I should not like to be committed definitely not to make a contract in connection with products of that kind. However, it is not our intention to set out upon making contracts under this act. It is our intention simply to carry on with the contracts we have made under the orders in council during wartime, and which have been continued under legislation up to the present. In other words, we have no present intention of going out and making contracts.

Mr. Bracken: Would the minister indicate what quantities of bacon, cheese and eggs are now leaving this country for sale in the United States?

Mr. Gardiner: There is no bacon going from this country to the United States, no Wiltshire sides going from here to the United States and, so far as I know, no pork products at all. No permits are being issued for pork products to go to the United States. Then, no permits are being issued for cheese shipments to that country. Our bacon and cheese, in so far as we have any surplus of those commodities, is all going to Britain.

When we made the agreement with Britain last fall, and when the discussions were held, Britain was not desirous of buying eggs from us. Unfortunately dried and frozen eggs had been declared surplus in the United States. So, had we not had a contract with Britain, we would not have been able to have sold any dried or frozen eggs, so far as we are aware, or at least a very limited amount of them. We presented our case to the British, and they finally agreed to take 46 million dozen eggs, mostly frozen and dried, but some in storage, which was about the same quantity as under last year's contract having regard to similar grades.

But there are no fresh eggs in this year's contract. All our fresh eggs being sold outside Canada—that is, practically all; there may be some going into ships' supplies and some going to the West Indies, but in limited quantities—are being sold in the United States. Perhaps I might explain a point which has been raised as to why permits were required to sell fresh eggs in the United States. I believe some members from British Columbia were inclined to criticize this procedure.

The system of permits is set up to safeguard ourselves against the possibility of having eggs in general declared surplus. Permits are issued to see to it that in the distribution and sale of our fresh eggs in the

United States, where they have a surplus and where their eggs are being sold in different forms to the British and European markets under ERP, we do not come in conflict with the Americans. Therefore, we asked those that desired to ship eggs into the United States to obtain permits so that there might be some regulation as to the points in that country to which eggs are sold, and so that there will not be any great surplus created at some places, as a result of which we would get into difficulties in our general sale and distribution of eggs in that country.

Mr. Michaud: Mr. Chairman, on March 10 I raised a marketing problem peculiar to my province. The minister was not in his seat at the time, but I am wondering whether my observations have been drawn to his attention. At that time I spoke concerning the marketing of our potatoes, and if what I said has not been brought to his attention may I point out that I made some inquiries and indicated that I would like him to give an answer at some early date. There is one question I want to ask in connection with the federal marketing act. Last year during the course of the debate, either on this bill or on some other bill relating to agriculture, I asked the minister whether it was the intention of the government to introduce a federal marketing act covering natural products. My recollection is that the minister's answer was that it was the intention of the government to introduce such legislation at that session. As we all know, that was not done.

I gathered from press reports which appeared on December 8 that the government did not intend to introduce such legislation.

Mr. Gardiner: It is on the order paper.

Mr. Michaud: I know that Bill No. 82 is on the order paper, but I doubt whether it meets the views of the federation of agriculture.

Mr. Gardiner: It was drafted in consultation with the federation of agriculture.

Mr. Michaud: The press report of December 8 reported that the minister advised the provincial governments during the dominion-provincial conference on agriculture that he was not prepared to say whether the dominion would enact marketing legislation at the forthcoming session of parliament.

Mr. Gardiner: Last December I could not have said that bill was going to be introduced because I am not the government. The government has agreed to introducing the bill now on the order paper for the approval of this house.