

*Agricultural Prices Support Act*

everything in our power to maintain the production of agricultural produce at a high level. The Minister of Agriculture referred to a statement he had made in 1944 when he said that they would not agree to the destruction of food. While we agree with that entirely, if the government's policies are such that the production of food is curtailed, then I submit they will be just as vicious as though food were to be destroyed. There can be no justification for the curtailing of food production while there are hungry people in the world.

**Mr. L. E. Cardiff (Huron North):** Mr. Speaker, I intend to support the bill but there are a few things I should like to say. Considering the money our Canadian farmers lost during the war they are entitled to at least a similar amount of support. We must not forget that the government sold our farmers short in the world markets and you are only giving them back what is rightfully theirs. A lot has been said already and I shall not repeat it. The hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue) said many things that I intended to say and again I shall not repeat. His troubles are not the same as mine because conditions in the different provinces vary.

The other day I read a press dispatch in which the minister was reported to have said that he was blaming oleomargarine for the present surplus of butter. I am glad he admits that, because everyone knows the government is responsible for the mess the dairy industry is in. If the provisions of this act are properly applied the dairy industry can be given the support it needs and should have if it is going to continue to operate. That industry was getting along fairly well before oleomargarine came into the picture. I am not arguing that oleomargarine should not be offered to the people but I do contend that the mark-up should not be greater than that on butter. If it were not so great there would not be so much oleomargarine sold. It will not take the place of butter except in the case of people who feel they cannot afford to buy butter at the price it is.

I should like to say a word on tariffs. We do not object to tariffs on certain goods in order to protect our manufacturers, but what difference is there between a tariff and a floor under agricultural prices? I cannot see any myself. If our manufacturers are entitled to protection our agriculturists are just as much entitled to a floor under their prices.

I think the government failed miserably when they permitted the price of eggs to stay where it was for so long. A number of flocks were disposed of and many people went out of hens when they really could not afford to. They were placed in a most

precarious position because the government did not take action soon enough. There was \$200 million behind this legislation and the government could have stepped in to support the egg market much sooner than they did.

I feel sorry for the veteran who has just started farming. The well-established farmer may be able to stand a drop in prices but the man who has just started up with very little is in an entirely different position when the prices of farm commodities come down. I hope that some support will be given to these men. Many veterans have gone into farming during the past five or six years and they have made good farmers. Many of them had very little to start with and if it had not been for their parents or good neighbours they would not have been able to start at all. Because of the small allowance they had many could not afford to buy sufficient machinery, and now when prices are below the cost of production they are in a serious position.

I may have more to say when the bill is before us, but I have nothing more to say at the moment.

**Mr. P. E. Wright (Melfort):** Mr. Speaker, along with other members who have taken part in this debate I am in agreement that these acts must be continued as the minister is proposing to do under the legislation which he has introduced today. We are not satisfied, however, that the mere extension of them will be enough to meet the problems of agriculture in this country at this time. I should like to deal for a short time with the Agricultural Products Act, the resolution concerning which we passed a short time ago as a result of which the bill was introduced and given first reading. Under that act as extended from year to year we have carried on our exports of agricultural products to Great Britain since 1947, and we are proposing to extend it for a further period of one year.

I was convinced at the time it was first introduced that there should have been more permanency to it than there was, that it should not have been an act which we had to extend from year to year. I felt that if we were going to continue to maintain our markets in Great Britain we would have to have a more permanent form of legislation under which they could be maintained. That was not the only reason we lost our British markets, but it was one reason. There were very few of us who expected, as a matter of fact, that we could retain our market in England to the extent that we had enjoyed it during the war years, especially during 1944 and 1945. We did expect, however, that we would be able to retain a fairly large portion of it, and at least a larger portion than we had