

Supply—Agriculture

graded U.S. No. 1 are offered at \$3.50 per cwt. f.o.b. country shipping point which is eastern Washington. Green split peas are similarly offered at \$4.50 per cwt. This price is less than we must pay our growers to produce in competition with wheat offers. It is the opinion of this office that American dealers are sloughing last year's surplus at a sacrifice in preparation for a plugged market this fall.

The letter goes on to deal with the various prices quoted and also points out that the United States government has a parity price on peas of \$3.50 per hundredweight. These peas have been offered f.o.b. Moscow, Idaho, at a price of \$3.85 per hundredweight which is 35 cents extra for cleaning, packing and bringing the peas to market. Canadian producers of the same commodity claim that these services cannot be given for less than \$1 per hundredweight. This letter is very fair, and goes on to point out:

We realize and were advised . . . that dumping is a very difficult fact to establish, even though we may be completely sure that such activity is occurring. We are advised, therefore, to plead our case on other grounds. These may be outlined as follows:

The government support price of wheat in Canada is in direct competition with our own price to growers for acreage; the government support price in the United States to peas has encouraged much speculation and overproduction in pea growing; and from what we gather in the newspapers and from the radio, the recent agreement of the American government to allow ECA funds to purchase Canadian wheat in the face of an American surplus of wheat puts us in a very difficult position, because by way of compensation for this to the Americans, surplus American fruits and vegetables are apparently to be allowed entry into Canada. You can readily see how disastrous this action is to us, who with no government supports or favours, must operate a business in what ultimately is government competition—both here and abroad. It is on the grounds of these latter-mentioned facts that we must base our plea to Ottawa to re-impose the emergency restrictions on the importation of American peas (and beans), which were removed about one year ago, and which have subsequently piled up surpluses of Canadian canning and edible peas.

Mr. Ferrie: How is it that they cannot produce these peas in British Columbia as cheaply as they can produce them in the United States?

Mr. Jones: I did not attempt to read the whole letter, but I tried to outline that the price in Canada is governed to a certain extent by the price the land would bring if it were producing wheat. Apparently it is good productive land, and in order to get the growers to plant peas they have to give a price equal to what would be received if the land were planted in wheat. I take it that is the reason the price is a little higher.

There is one other thing I should like to mention. I feel that we must do something about our export market. I know it is a sore subject, and a difficult one, but recently in England I noticed in all the larger towns that they have a great deal more South African canned products, not only canned

fruit and vegetables but also canned fish, than when I was last there. We are losing out in the British market on a commodity in which we excel. Incidentally, everywhere I went people said to me, "What has happened to the Canadian salmon?" It is almost unobtainable in England. If steps are not taken soon to protect that market we are going to abdicate in favour of other members of the commonwealth who are, fortunately for them, in the sterling bloc.

The object of my brief talk is to impress upon the minister the vital need for restoring the overseas market for Canadian fruit and canned vegetables. I know there are difficulties as to currency, dollars, but I have noticed that other countries have overcome those difficulties either by a straight exchange of goods or by some other means. I understand there are several methods, and I would suggest that they be investigated and possibly given a trial to see if they will work out with the commodities I have mentioned. Failing that, I would certainly urge the minister to protect our domestic market with strong and forceful anti-dumping laws. It is our only sure market, and owing to the loss of our overseas market a healthy, prosperous domestic market is a must, if we are going to keep a large body of people operating successfully in the fruit and vegetable industries, not only in British Columbia but in the whole of Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, I shall not be in the chamber when some of these estimates with particular reference to agriculture will be dealt with in detail. With your leave, sir, and the leave of the committee, there are two matters that I should like to bring to the attention of the minister at this time. One has to do with a situation that has arisen in the province of Saskatchewan and to a lesser degree in Alberta.

While crops have been generally good, there are large areas in which there has been, in whole or in part, a complete failure. This afternoon the minister dealt at some length with his intention to introduce amendments in connection with the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. He set forth in detail the operation of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, joining them together as two measures designed to relieve and assist the people of the prairie provinces against recurrent drought and its effects.

The first matter to which I wish to direct the attention of the minister is—it applies in part to my own constituency and to others in southwestern Saskatchewan where there has been a total or almost total failure of the crops—that there are two or three areas in which the farmers have gone into cattle and