

Position of Agricultural Industry

4-8. If less than 450 case lots were sold the percentage came to 8. And yet this is a statement which says that the total costs to the board would be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The minister has stated recently that there were no troublesome surpluses besides canned pork and beef held in the United States. There are other surpluses. I have figures here from the weekly dairy produce market report for the week ended March 14. This is a report put out by the Department of Agriculture marketing service. It shows that in the week ended March 14, 1953, the total production of cheese was 3,157 boxes. That was just 144 per cent more than the amount produced in the same period the year previously. Yet the minister continues to say that there is no surplus. I wonder where this cheese that is produced is going. The minister claims, as he has claimed in the house before, that we could eat it all here, and that even Ontario, producing that much cheese, could eat it all here, or maybe a few pounds would be eaten in the west, but most of it could be eaten in Ontario. At page 3220 of *Hansard* the minister said:

Food production is the highest in our experience. The reason for the increase is to be found in the fact that the only part of the Dominion of Canada that produces more food than it can eat is the prairie provinces.

Then a little further down he said:

One product that in the past was not consumed in the province was cheese but in the last year Ontario ate practically all the cheese it produced too. They do not eat quite all of it; they ship some of it west and we help them to eat it; but certainly it can all be consumed in Canada and consumed easily.

I happen to know that there is quite a surplus of cheese at the moment. With these figures of 144 per cent more production than there was a year ago it is presumed that there will be a considerable amount of surplus cheese in a very short time.

During 1952 this country imported a considerable amount of cheese, as set forth in an answer to a question asked by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Lennox (Mr. Tustin) on March 4, 1953. According to that answer the total amount of cheese imported into this country in 1952 was 12,086,764 pounds. In the face of a surplus of cheese this government permitted the importation of 12 million pounds.

In the case of powdered milk, the minister knows that there is a surplus of powdered milk, both skim and whole powdered milk. He knows that. If he does not know it then I advise him to get in touch with his officials who do know.

Mr. Gardiner: We have a surplus now, but we had no considerable surplus when the speech was made.

Mr. Charlton: I am not speaking about last year, I am speaking about now, and there is a surplus of powdered milk as the minister must know.

Mr. Gardiner: We have it. Of course we know.

Mr. Charlton: The situation is most embarrassing to this government. When the minister was speaking to the dominion-provincial agricultural conference last fall, he said, as reported in the *Ottawa Journal*:

Price problems of farmers up to provinces says Gardiner.

He does not want to face the responsibility now that prices are getting bad. He wants to hand it back to the provinces as their responsibility.

The responsibility with respect to vegetable oils was handed back to the provinces on top of a reduction of 13 per cent in the tariff on oils coming into this country. Another very peculiar thing the minister said the other day was that, on top of the rosy picture he was painting, the farmers were better off now than they ever were and they knew it. I think he would be advised to speak to some of the people he is talking about before he makes that statement again. He said, as reported at page 3220 of *Hansard*:

If one really wanted to make out a table which would indicate what the relationships are as between the farmers of the east and the farmers of the west, I think one would be able to show that about 90 per cent of the farmers in the eastern part of Canada do not make enough to pay income tax at all.

For the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominion of Canada, which is an agricultural country, to make a statement of that kind is almost unbelievable.

Mr. Gardiner: Is it not correct? I am accustomed to making correct statements, and that statement is correct, as the hon. member knows.

Mr. Charlton: Either one or the other of the statements is not correct. Either "90 per cent of the farmers are not making enough to pay income tax" or "they are better off now than they were before, and they know it." Both statements cannot be right.

Mr. Gardiner: Oh, yes, they can.

Mr. Charlton: We will let the minister have his fun.

Mr. Gardiner: When your party was in power they did not have any income tax to pay, in most cases.