

they will not do any transplanting this year. They will decide to go out of business, because they cannot continue at that price and make ends meet. Last year they were getting twice what they are going to get this year, and naturally they were encouraged to go on. I do not know of any strawberry grower who made a fortune. There is no crop that I know of that requires more labour, not only in the spring and summer but throughout twelve months of the year. I can speak from experience because I have hoed strawberry plants many times and I know something of the difficulties faced by these growers. We are appealing now to the minister to take some action and have this price changed in order that our farmers may have a chance. The suggestion made to the minister the other day was a very reasonable one. It may have been his nice smile, but I was carried away by the reception we got and I thought we were going to have good results. However, it shows that you cannot always tell when you go for an interview just what you are going to get. Apparently it was just a sliding out that we got. However, we realize he is placed in a difficult position. He is not a farmer; he does not know and he must depend upon what his officials tell him. When members representing these different districts come to him and lay the facts before him, their views should be listened to. I join my voice in protest against this order and ask that it be changed even at this late date.

Mr. R. W. MAYHEW (Victoria, B.C.): Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing to-day is due entirely to the fact that those who are setting our prices do not take into consideration the views of hon. members representing the different districts. This matter is not the sole responsibility of the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) and I think the farmers of British Columbia will be indebted to him for bringing the matter up at this time. I am wholly in accord with what he and the other hon. members have said. The price being allowed for strawberries will not pay the cost of production.

While there are no strawberries grown in my district, they are grown, and have been grown successfully for a number of years, in Nanaimo, which adjoins my riding. It is on behalf of the strawberry growers of that district that I am speaking. I am sure that while the consumers would like to get berries as cheaply as possible, they would not want to get them below the actual cost of production. If the members from British Columbia who represent strawberry growing districts had been called in before this order was issued,

[Mr. Reid.]

I am sure it would not have been put out in its present form. I hope this will be remembered in the future by the people who make out these orders. I was speaking to one man early in February and I told him that if a ceiling price was to be put on berries it should be announced in good time so that the people could make the necessary preparation. He said that that would be done, and yet we find this order announced just when the berries are about to be picked. At the present time there are a few berries being picked near Gordon Head and in Keating district, but they will soon be in full production all over. The price of 27 cents a quart which has been set is away below the cost of production.

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that there are one or two matters which might properly come within the purview of this discussion. Many of us in this house have urged year in and year out that agriculture should be properly represented on the boards and commissions which this government has set up. I think most hon. members who represent farming and agricultural districts will be in agreement with that statement.

Mr. ILSLEY: There certainly was in this case.

Mr. GRAYDON: I was just going to ask the question which the minister now purports to answer. What representation was there of the producers of this commodity on the board which set the prices in this order?

Mr. ILSLEY: E. J. Chambers is administrator of fruits.

Mr. GRAYDON: The minister talks about E. J. Chambers being the representative of agriculture in the setting of these prices. May I ask him whether Mr. Chambers is a producer of strawberries?

Mr. ILSLEY: I do not think so.

Mr. GRAYDON: I am quite sure that he is not, and when the minister suggests that civil servants are to be the representatives of the farmers in deciding costs of production and as to the general situation in connection with agriculture, I take issue with him.

I am not going into the merits of this particular case at the moment, except to say that I have listened with much interest and not a little sympathy to those who have spoken on the question brought up by the member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank). But I do want the minister to consider this one point,