

On the same page, he said:

We have attempted to avoid giving wrong information to the British as to what food would be supplied or could be supplied from year to year. Then we have written into the contracts the highest quantities that we felt sure we could deliver to the British.

In 1947, Mr. Speaker, instead of delivering 350 million pounds of bacon to Britain, we delivered only 225.9 million pounds. In 1948, when the minister said we would have a contract providing for 400 million pounds, we had a contract providing for only 225 million pounds. Of that quantity we delivered to Britain only 176.4 million pounds.

Mr. Gardiner: As I recall it, we did not have a contract for 225 million pounds in 1948; we had a contract for 195 million pounds at the request of Britain.

Mr. Argue: As I understand it, at the beginning of last year the contract was for 195 million pounds. I was informed by the Department of Agriculture a few weeks ago that part of the beef contract had been substituted for an increased bacon contract, and therefore our final 1948 contract was 225 million pounds.

Mr. Gardiner: The point is that the contract for 1948 was reduced at the request of Britain, and we made other arrangements in connection with the marketing of meat products.

Mr. Coldwell: Was it not because we had not delivered in the past?

Mr. Gardiner: No; there was a request to have it reduced to the lowest figure we could possibly hold.

Mr. Argue: For the moment it does not matter too much whether Britain requested that the contract be reduced—

Mr. Gardiner: For the hon. member's argument I think it does, because he says that in 1947 the minister made certain suggestions as to what would be required. Those suggestions were not changed by anyone in this country; they were changed by the British request that they be reduced.

Mr. Argue: I will answer that, too. I was about to say that even though the contract was reduced, the minister did not set up the conditions which are necessary to encourage farmers to produce even that small quantity.

I want to say to the Minister of Agriculture that the people of Great Britain and the British government did not wish to have their Canadian bacon contract reduced. If our government had increased its purchases of British goods, Britain would have taken increased quantities of agricultural products. I have read Sir Stafford Cripps' recent com-

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prehensive press statement, and there is no suggestion in it that the British people wanted to take less bacon. The governing factor is the availability of dollars. If this government would undertake policies that would provide Britain with those dollars, then Britain would purchase increased quantities of bacon and our farmers would have an adequate and stable market. That is what this government should be doing.

In 1946 the minister again told us, and I quote from page 4779 of *Hansard*:

Taking that into consideration we have not been prepared to agree that Canada ought to accept, even if it were suggested—and I am not saying it has been suggested—a constant reduction in the quantities contained in our contracts, beginning say with the first year after the war and continuing downward through the years following the war.

In 1946, therefore, the minister said there would not be a continuing reduction in our bacon contracts. But our bacon contract in 1946 was for 450 million pounds; in 1948, it was for 195 million pounds—we shall use the lower figure—and this year it is for 160 million pounds. I say there is no contradicting the statement that we are losing, and losing very rapidly, our hold on the British market.

On previous occasions the minister has stated that we should not be too much worried about whether or not the British food contracts are for reduced quantities, because, the minister said, farmers are returning to wheat production on most of the ten million acres they took out of wheat during the war. I say that the British contracts for bacon, cheese and eggs should be greatly expanded, because when the farmers start to increase wheat production I fear they will find their wheat markets dwindling too. One reason why the food contracts should be for greater quantities is that Canada's quota in the new international wheat agreement is for 30 million bushels less than in the agreement drawn up last year, and the maximum price is twenty cents a bushel less than the maximum price of last year. This year there are forty-two importing countries involved in the agreement, whereas last year there were only thirty-three. On the basis of the present wheat agreement, it means there are nine countries fewer to take the quantities of wheat Canada must export outside of the agreement.

Our wheat markets are dwindling. Our wheat markets are not secure, and because they are not secure this government should see that Canada produces the larger quantities of bacon, cheese and eggs which the British would be very happy to obtain.

Our agricultural markets are not at all secure. Our agricultural markets depend