

*Agricultural Products Board*

I must say that at times there has been far more criticism of the heights to which they have gone than there has been of low prices since. A year ago when the question was up for consideration those who represent the producers and handlers of eggs came to my office and unanimously asked us to continue the same policy for another year. We did so.

I was waiting for an appropriate time to be able to announce what we are going to do in the coming year, and I think this is as good a time as any. We have had representations again this year from all across Canada, and the question was fully discussed at the agricultural conference held in December. The vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, speaking for the federation because the president was not there, said definitely they were of the opinion that the price should not be set at less than 38 cents. Of course he would not object to its being set higher, but it was their considered opinion that it should not be set at less than 38 cents, or in other words that we should not lower it. That was on the very day eggs dropped 12 cents a dozen in Ottawa. Those representations were after they had dropped 12 cents.

What we have decided to do is continue the same policy for 1952 as we had through 1950 and 1951; namely, at the end of the season we are prepared to buy all "A" large eggs which are in storage at Montreal on a basis of 38 cents. The prices range up and down across Canada from there. Therefore we are not changing the policy at all, and we think it would be bad practice to change a policy which has worked so well as the one I have been discussing. In order to indicate how well it has worked I want to point out that the average wholesale price of grade A large eggs at Montreal in 1943 was 45 cents a dozen. In 1944 they sold at 41 cents a dozen, and in 1945 at 43 cents a dozen. The average for the first eleven months of 1951 is 67.4 cents per dozen. That is not bad, of course; and that is under the policy we are now following. I might say that at present the price is 55 cents.

In order to give the whole table at one time I think I might just as well continue. The figures for cheese, No. 1, are 1943, 22 cents; 1944, 21 cents and 1945, 21 cents. The average for the first eleven months of 1951

is 37.5 cents. I would point out that the question raised by the hon. member for Brant-Wentworth a few moments ago is involved there. Cheese is now handled under a producers board in the province of Ontario, and of course we would not interfere in any way with that handling. As a matter of fact we have not only co-operated with them but advised very strongly that it be handled that way. The figures for butter, No. 1, are 1943, 36 cents; 1944, 36 cents, and 1945, 37 cents. For the first eleven months of 1951 they run from 61.6 to 68 cents a pound.

Then I come to whole milk prices to farmers at dairy, per hundredweight. The exact figure for 1943 is not here, but for 1944 it is \$2.50 and for 1945, \$2.50. For the first eleven months of 1951 it averages \$4.32. For B-1 hogs the figure for 1943 is \$16.94; 1944, \$17.25 and 1945, \$18.20. For the first eleven months of 1951 it is \$33.88 per hundredweight. For fancy B.C. McIntosh apples the figure for a 42-pound box for 1943 is \$3.36; 1944, \$3.07, and 1945, \$3.46. This is the first product for which the price was lower in 1951 than in the three years at the end of the war. It is \$2.94, but I would remind the committee that in that period the government was giving considerable assistance, because of conditions that existed during the war, in order to bring about the prices to which I have referred.

Then I come to potatoes. For 1943 the figure is \$2.26; for 1944, \$2.33, and for 1945, \$2.57. For the first eleven months of 1951 it is \$2.19, but at the present time it is \$4. I could review the prices at the present time for the others, but only in respect of potatoes is there sufficient variation from the average for the first eleven months of 1951 to make any considerable difference in the answer that might be given to these questions. That is the present position, and I would only say in conclusion with respect to eggs, about which I was specifically asked, that we think the policy we have followed for the last two years, and which has brought about the results I have indicated, is not one from which we should lightly depart in so far as the interests of the producer are concerned.

**Mr. Bryce:** I should like to ask the minister a question.

**Mr. Gardiner:** As a matter of fact I might say that the hon. member for Melfort asked for all the figures with respect to the first three years I have mentioned, and I added the others.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Will you put the whole table on the record?