

*War Appropriation—Agriculture*

perity the farmer has lately enjoyed. I recall that on that occasion the minister absorbed the eulogies, smiling occasionally, and expanding himself when he rose to reply and to thank his supporters for their compliments.

To-day, however, he did go out of his way to make proper references to the hon. member for Haldimand, and to a certain extent did give credit where it belonged; that is, to the farmer. If I remember correctly, his expression was that the farmer had followed the instructions and requests made by his department, in almost every respect, in regard to increased production.

The minister referred to the farm representation on different boards, a point which had been raised earlier by the hon. member for Haldimand. The minister's reply was that the government had set up advisory committees, and that on those committees the farmers have direct representation, just as they have in some of the farm organizations and cooperatives. Well, that is all very well. I might say that a review of some of the statements made by different organizations discloses that they have such representation. But it is a little difficult to see where the suggestions they make from time to time are implemented or put into force.

Replying to what was said this afternoon by the minister, I would point out to him that if he will go back to 1942 and 1943, when the boards were first set up, he will see that on those occasions the hon. member for Haldimand, and others on this side of the house, demanded that farmers and producers have direct representation on the boards. That was not allowed. The farmer did not receive such representation at that time, and he is getting it now only in a roundabout way, by representation on the advisory committees. Well, that is all to the good.

To return to the credit hon. members tried to give the minister, on the former occasion when the minister's estimates were before the committee, might I say that when those hon. members gave the minister credit for increased production and increased price levels I was tempted to ask the minister then what Providence might have had to do with it. What did the farmer, himself, have to do with it? I believe it is apparent he has had much to do with it. Then, what has the war had to do with it? Surely we realize that it has brought about a demand for increased production of all kinds. I suggest that these are some of the reasons why we have had the increase. No matter who might have been sitting on the treasury benches, the farmer would have met the demand, when or if it was necessary.

[Mr. Perley.]

I shall not deal with subsidies until we reach the item in the estimates dealing with that subject.

May I express my agreement with what has been said by the hon. member for Haldimand with respect to prices? The ceiling price should not apply to certain farm products, but certainly floor prices should. I, for one, was disappointed that before this we had not had presented to the house the bill to establish floor prices which the Minister of Finance said was to be introduced. We should have had that bill before us before these estimates were presented. We should have it before us, before concluding our discussions on the war appropriation estimates, so that we may know exactly what the minister has in mind, what he means by floor prices, how he is to establish them and what they are to be. We should have had that information, particularly in view of the minister's announcement of Friday last that he was going to go west next Saturday night, no matter what happens, whether these estimates are through or not. Before he leaves this city to go west, to take part, as we know, in a certain campaign out there, he should let us have that bill respecting floor prices, so that we may know what it is all about.

The stock grading system is not satisfactory. I have had communications from and talked with farmers and shippers who are not at all satisfied. I suggest that to make it more satisfactory some change should be made.

The situation set out this afternoon by the hon. member for Yorkton with respect to the processing and distribution of live stock works all to the advantage of the packers, I do not think the present grading system is what it should be. I believe it should be revised. I am going to quote the statement referred to this afternoon by the hon. member for Haldimand, as having been made by the president of Canada Packers before the price spreads committee in 1934, in regard to live stock prices;

The total live stock is sold for the total sum, whatever it is; from that sum is deducted first the packer's expense and the packer's profit and the farmer gets the balance.

I imagine the same rule is followed at the present time. There has been no change in the grading system or the regulations; the farmer gets whatever is left after the packer takes his profit and expenses. On previous occasions we on this side have suggested that a board of live stock commissioners should be set up in order to assist producers of live stock as the board of grain commissioners assists producers of grain. I think I have referred to this matter once or twice already this