

*Agricultural Prices Support Act*

districts was that the Conservatives as well as the Liberals were in favour of this legislation, and there was no issue because the farmers knew they were going to have a continuance of the policy which one of the great agriculturists of Great Britain, an old Tory peer, Lord Bledisloe, described as the great agricultural charter.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Put in by the Conservatives, in the first place.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Did I not say that?

**Mr. Gardiner:** Yes.

**Mr. Coldwell:** I said it was the coalition government.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Before that.

**Mr. Coldwell:** And I said it had been carried a step farther by the Labour government. I thought I was perfectly fair in what I said, because I was not giving the credit to any one government for having done all of it. I do not propose to do that, because I think the less partisanship we have in dealing with this problem the better it will be for all of us and for the country. May I remind the minister that what I am doing now is endeavouring not to discuss this from any partisan standpoint at all, but rather to put before the government what I believe should be considered, and modified to meet our Canadian conditions perhaps, but nevertheless undertaken in part by the government in Canada.

The increase in the last few years in farm production owing to that policy in Great Britain has been nothing short of phenomenal. Figures I have here from a British government report—and I am not referring to any party report—show that the dairy herds have increased by over 200,000 head, young cows by more than 400,000 head and other cattle by 35,000 head since 1947. Flocks of sheep have increased by two and three quarter million. The heavy losses suffered in the winter of 1947, which hon. members will recall, have been completely overcome.

**Mr. Smith (Calgary West):** The flocks of sheep in the House of Commons have also been increased.

**Mr. Coldwell:** I am not commenting on that situation just now although I may on some other occasion. The same thing with pigs; 1,200,000 more last year than in 1947. Poultry, 10 million more than in June, 1948. As we all know, the production and consumption of fluid milk has increased by over 60 per cent.

**Mr. Hosking:** They still only get two pints per week.

**Mr. Coldwell:** It has been increased a little lately, but supposing what my hon. friend

says is true, the fact is that they are drinking 60 per cent more fluid milk than they were in 1939 before the war.

**Mr. Bryce:** I should like to correct the statement made by the hon. gentleman who has just interrupted.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the hon. gentleman rising on a question of privilege?

**Mr. Bryce:** I want to tell the hon. gentleman that there is no milk rationing in Great Britain.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Even if there was, what I am saying is that forward pricing has increased both the production and consumption of fluid milk. While what my hon. friend has said may have been true, they are drinking 60 per cent more than they were in 1939. Every child in school is provided with a bottle of milk and instead of a few people with money being able to buy all the milk, the kiddies of Great Britain are getting milk today, many of them for the first time in their lives. That is the answer to the interjection made by the hon. member.

As I said, minimum prices are fixed well in advance. For instance, in the spring of 1949 prices were announced for the 1951 harvest. Livestock prices have been fixed right up to 1953. My hon. friends will say that that requires a good deal of planning and regimentation. As a matter of fact, what planning there is is undertaken by the county committees consisting of the farmers themselves. The farmers, the farm workers and even the land owners have the principal say in the planning of agricultural production. Although it is peculiarly difficult to plan agriculture, the fact is that it has been rather successfully done and without regimentation under the agricultural act to which I have referred.

I think we have to go beyond where the proposed resolution takes us, although it perhaps takes us part of the way. We must adopt a policy of agricultural advance pricing. The condition in our own country with regard to future markets is uncertain. I am not going to repeat what has been said about how we are going to market any surpluses that may occur in the future. This afternoon the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) quoted from a speech he made in 1944 when he said that we could not dump foodstuffs into the sea or into our lakes, that we could not burn or destroy them. I thoroughly agree that we have to find other ways of disposing of these goods for the welfare of mankind.

We have suggested on occasion, and it has been suggested today, that we should try to enter into direct trade relationships with our customers and arrange for the exchange of