

Agricultural Products Act

which I have enunciated in connection with these apples—that was inflicted upon the British people back in 1932 to 1936.

Britain is a country which must get about fifty per cent of its food from outside. It does not make any difference what we think about it. Only seven per cent of the people in Great Britain are producing food and the whole one hundred per cent are consuming it. When we look at the situation in this country as compared with that in Great Britain, we find it to be this. Close to thirty per cent of our people are actually living on the land, and a considerable percentage of them are so closely associated with it that they might just as well be called part of the farm population. Those who are buying grain along the line in western Canada in elevators, those who are distributing farm implements to farmers and so on are all so closely associated with agriculture that they might just as well be classified as agriculturists themselves. When one considers the proportion of the population in this country which is on our farms, which is dependent upon the production of food for a living, and then compares that situation with the conditions in Britain where only seven per cent of their people are on the land, where they are living on a small island that in area would be only a small part of any one of the larger provinces of Canada, where fifty million people are living there, then one must realize that if these people are to live on a small island, and if they are to eat, they must import around 50 per cent of their food.

When they reach the conclusion that that is what they must do, the next thing they must assure themselves of is that they are going to have the food year by year. It is all very well for those of us who are sitting in Canada to say: Yes, we have lots of food. We have some surpluses to sell. We want you to sit there and even, if necessary, remain hungry until we come over with sufficient food in order to feed you. But the British do not operate in that way. When they were asked to deny themselves the free market for food from all over the world, the British said that they would require to go to the different countries which had surpluses of food to sell and to buy it in advance, not wait until their people were starving, not wait—as my friends across the way apparently would—until the emergency is so great that everybody is suffering under it before you do anything about it. They have gone out in advance, they have gone into different countries, and have contracted for the products that they require.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gardiner: I am rather surprised that the only people who can say "hear, hear" to

that, when the statements are made, are my friends of the socialist party. I would think that the official opposition in this house would be shouting their heads off every time that is mentioned—

Mr. Bentley: It ain't constitutional.

Mr. Gardiner: —because it was the good old Tory party in Great Britain, co-operating with the good old Tory party in this country, which brought about the condition that made these negotiations for quotas a necessity. Even the leader of the Conservative party in this house at the time, the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett—

Mr. MacNicol: A great man.

Mr. Gardiner: Yes, a greater man than any one they have in the party now.

Mr. Ross (Souris): That was not your story in those days.

Mr. Gardiner: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett knew that there was not any great difference in principle between a policy which set up quotas and made it possible for one government to go and deal with another in order to see to it that they were able to secure products out of that country in order to sell things of their own, and the old policies they had been advocating of controlling the situation by protecting the commodities by other methods. He said that was quite all right, they would do that; and that is what they are doing. Apparently the only people in this house who criticized them for doing it are my hon. friends of the official opposition. There is only one criticism which one could make of the British in connection with this matter, and it is not a criticism of them. There is only one criticism that one could make of the situation with which they find themselves confronted. I sometimes wonder why people read from a document and deliberately do not read it all. If I do not like what a document says I do not read it at all.

I have in my hand the document which has been scattered around this house and has been read by hon. members from all parties. It is a press statement, not a speech, made by Sir Stafford Cripps, the chancellor of the exchequer.

Mr. Tustin: Are you going to read it all?

Mr. Gardiner: No, I am not going to read it all. Most of my hon. friends have it and they can read it for themselves. This document was issued on February 23, 1949. It is addressed to editors, not to members of par-