

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Harkness: I am referring to page 5 of the current review published in January. That is what the hon. member read from.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I thought the hon. gentleman said I did not read from government publications.

Mr. Harkness: In this particular instance the hon. gentleman did. As a matter of fact the hon. gentleman said he would give us a page reference, and this was the only instance in which he was able to give us a page number. He did that with respect to this publication.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The minister must remember that I am just a novice.

Mr. Harkness: This, of course, was a great exception. I am sure the hon. member finds the Martin bureau of statistics much more favourable for his purposes than the publications of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Sometimes it is much more accurate.

Mr. Harkness: That has yet to be demonstrated, Mr. Chairman. We have seen no evidence of that as yet.

With reference to the cost of production, the hon. member made a great to-do about reading extracts from speeches I made last year when the stabilization bill was put through, and so forth. We have carried on a considerable number of cost of production studies. As a result of these studies we have attempted to determine as accurately as possible what is the cost of production for various commodities, and then on the basis of that information we have set the floor prices in relation to the cost of production, which is exactly what we said we would do when the stabilization act was introduced last year.

The hon. member for Essex East also said that I only compared 1958 with the preceding year. That is not the case. I compared it with 1957, 1956, 1955 and 1954. I pointed out that the gross income in 1958 was 10 per cent greater than in 1957, 7½ per cent greater than in 1956, 20 per cent greater than in 1955 and 20 per cent greater than in 1954. In other words the hon. member was guilty of making many inaccurate statements in referring to remarks made by me at various times in the past year.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): If I said that I was wrong.

Mr. Harkness: As a result of this the conclusions he drew were equally fallacious. When he concluded his speech the hon. member was complaining, as far as I could make

out, about the fact that we were letting in a certain number of canned fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I was wondering if that were a fact.

Mr. Harkness: I was somewhat surprised at the hon. member complaining about the fact that the tariffs and importation bans on these things were not higher or more stringent. I thought he was a low tariff or free trade advocate, but today he complained that the tariffs were not higher or that these commodities were not being excluded altogether.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, I believe the hon. member misunderstood me, and I am sure he would not want to deliberately misunderstand my reference. I was simply inquiring of the minister if as a result of the findings of his staff he was able to ascertain whether or not the question put the other day by the hon. member for one of the Middlesex constituencies to the Minister of Trade and Commerce was as that hon. gentleman alleged. In this instance I was simply asking the Minister of Agriculture for some information. I assure him I was not making an argument.

Mr. Harkness: Certainly the implication was that we should increase these tariffs or keep these goods out. As a matter of fact the hon. member in the past made that request of me in connection with soya beans.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes, that is right, and I make it now.

Mr. Harkness: The hon. gentleman wanted to have the tariff greatly increased, or he wanted an importation ban put on to keep them out altogether. In other words, I say he talks out of one side of his mouth when he is in certain localities, posing as a great exponent of free trade and low tariffs, but when it comes to talking to the farmers in his own part of the country he poses as an exponent of high tariffs, import controls, and so forth.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Don't be too hard on me.

Mr. Harkness: So much for the remarks made by the hon. member for Essex East.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): You spend too much time on me.

Mr. Harkness: As the hon. gentleman says, perhaps I spend too much time on him, but he made so many completely inaccurate statements that I thought it worth while to set him on the right path in some of these matters since he is now going to be the chief agricultural critic of the official opposition.