

Supply—Agriculture

As an essential part of its post-war policy, the government intends to ask parliament at the next session, to place a floor under the prices of the main farm commodities.

The first method of support provided in the act is the power to buy any designated agricultural product at a defined price. A second method of supporting prices is also provided for in the act and involves the determination of a price which is regarded as fair for a particular product for a particular period of time. Under the act how are they going to ascertain what is a fair price? I think this is the nub of the whole situation. The act has this to say in that regard:

. . . in prescribing prices . . . the board shall endeavour to ensure adequate and stable returns for agriculture by promoting orderly adjustment from war to peace conditions and shall endeavour to secure a fair relationship between the returns from agriculture and those from other occupations.

It would seem that the government has completely evaded its responsibility in this respect because every time that the price of hogs starts to approach the floor the floor is immediately dropped. We have seen that happen and we may see it happen again. I hope we do not. I hope the government is going to make some attempt at least to maintain some semblance of a floor under hogs throughout the country. I should like to see it go a little further than that. I should like to see the act really have some teeth in it.

There was a discussion in the house the other day regarding this very question, and I have yet to hear the minister make a clear and forthright statement as to just what the situation is. It seems to me there is a great deal of confusion in the mind of the minister and also in the minds of producers.

Mr. Studer: In the minds of the socialists.

Mr. Bryson: I am very glad to see that the hon. member—

Mr. Studer: The only place where there is confusion is in the minds of the socialists.

Mr. Bryson:—for Swift Current-Maple Creek has at last got over the terrific case of laryngitis he has had for the last two or three days—

Mr. Studer: I do not make socialist speeches.

Mr. Bryson:—during the debate on wheat. On January 31 it was brought to the attention of the minister that hog producers were receiving less than the floor price and at that time the minister said, as found at page 708 of *Hansard*:

In any case where the matter is brought to the attention of the Department of Agriculture the officials see to it that the proper price is paid and, of course, the farmer will not settle until he gets his premium and all the rest of it. That is all checked. The proper procedure is for the

farmer or anyone receiving the certificate from the farmer to immediately send it to the prices board.

I am wondering how many farmers know that. Why is it that the farmers are continually receiving less than the floor price? I am still getting these receipts and they are from different companies, Canada Packers, Intercontinental Packers, Burns and others. Why is it that the farmers are not made acquainted with this regulation? It looks to me as if the floor price is being maintained because of some tacit understanding between the government and the packers. I have never seen instructions posted anywhere advising producers that they have this recourse.

Mr. Trainor: You advise them.

Mr. Studer: Why do the socialists not go into the packing business?

Mr. Bryson: Of course we know that the minister was quite concerned about it. This is not the first time it has happened. It happened in 1953 when the floor was dropped from 26 to 23 cents. I hope the minister will make a clear and forthright statement today as to just what the condition of affairs is with relation to the floor price, because I know that not one farmer in western Canada realizes there is any such machinery set up whereby he can be recompensed for the difference between what he receives and the so-called floor price.

Mr. Gardiner: If my hon. friend will permit me, when he says there is not a farmer in western Canada who knows what the condition is he is saying there is not a farmer in the pool organization of western Canada because the pool has all the information and they are in a position to inform individuals as to how to proceed.

Mr. Bryson: I am still not satisfied.

Mr. Gardiner: You never will be.

Mr. Bryson: In reply to a question by the hon. member for Yorkton the minister said, as found at page 790 of *Hansard*:

The floor price is made available at the stockyard. Any person delivering hogs in Saskatchewan can get the floor price at the stockyard and there is no excuse for anyone not getting it provided he takes the hogs there.

This again I cannot understand.

Mr. Studer: Where do you take your hogs?

Mr. Bryson: I have delivered quite a lot of hogs in my time.

Mr. Studer: Where do you take them now?

Mr. Bryson: I take them where 90 per cent of the farmers take them, to the local stockyard. I unload them there and I do not go to Winnipeg. I do not know what