

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Cruickshank: I cannot answer the hon. member's question, but I do not wish to be turned aside into a discussion of margarine, because in most cases it is made out of whale oil and any other useless kind of oil one can get. However, I cannot answer the question which I have been asked.

While I do not wish to discuss dairy products at this time, I would ask the minister to give serious consideration to a floor price, or some protection for the filbert growers in British Columbia, not in my constituency only.

Mr. Jones: I should like to take some time to deal with a subject which I believe has been neglected, namely the fruit of the Okanagan valley. I know it has been suggested that we talk a good deal about this subject, but we do so because we are not satisfied that it has received the recognition it deserves throughout Canada.

First of all I would express my thanks, and those of the industry in general, to the Minister of Agriculture for producing and passing the marketing act at the last session. The growers have worked hard for some protection of that kind, and I can tell him truthfully that the reception given the news was as great as that given the news of a victory overseas during the war. It was only just that the government should take away the great element of gambling from the growing of fruit. They have had to gamble with the weather, with pests and other hazards of the fruit-growing industry, and I cannot see any reason why they should not be given all the protection the government can give them, particularly in the domestic market. This bill can be the source of that protection as far as the domestic market is concerned, and I fully believe that the minister has that in mind.

But we must consider other markets as well. A couple of weeks ago I was in England for the summer holidays and I went out of my way to find out the type of apple that was being offered for sale. I was amazed at the low-grade apples that were displayed in the stores of London, Manchester, Liverpool and other cities. These were apples which, I think the hon. member for Fraser Valley will readily admit, would be considered in British Columbia as culls of a very inferior type. They would not be allowed to be offered for sale in that province. I understand the statement has been made that the British people are getting all the apples they want, but I can state definitely that that statement is not correct. The apples they are getting are of a most inferior grade.

An hon. Member: Where are they from?

Mr. Jones: Most of them were domestic.

[Mr. Harris (Danforth).]

An hon. Member: Fraser Valley.

Mr. Jones: Most of the dealers and consumers that I spoke to told me that they regretted the Canadian apple was not available. They all felt that the best apple that had ever been offered on the British market was the Canadian apple. As far as they were concerned—I am referring now to the consumers and dealers, not to the government—they were willing to do anything reasonable in order to get the Canadian apple back again.

I should like to deal briefly with the domestic market. As is known, we in British Columbia have geared our production of fruit to the needs of the British market. We selected and pruned our trees in order to produce the varieties demanded by Great Britain. They do not care for a large apple or one that is too small, so we pruned our trees to produce an apple that suited the British market. But the British market has been lost and the apple we are producing is not suitable for United States or domestic consumption. Therefore, this apple has become a heavy member of the cull group, not because of quality or colour but simply because of size.

We contend that we have suffered a terrific loss through losing the British market for this particular variety of apple, but what alarms us most is the fact that dumping of apples and other fruit products by the United States and Europe is being permitted. I should like to read extracts from two resolutions which were passed this spring by the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association. One reads as follows:

Whereas the West Kootenay was put on a quota of 27 per cent for processing of Bing and Lambert cherries for the 1948 season, and

Whereas the growers of the district, covered by the Sunshine Bay local of this organization, would like to know definitely whether the above quota will be maintained for the future, and whether there is any definite hope of an increase—

In other words, the growers of cherries were placed on a quota. At the same convention, possibly the same day, the following resolution was passed:

Whereas a processed cherry industry of considerable importance has been established in Canada during the past seven or eight years, and

Whereas growers have been encouraged to produce cherries suitable for this industry, and

Whereas our market for these cherries is seriously threatened by the importation of similar cherries from Italy, packed in brine and subject only to a tariff of 17½ per cent ad valorem.

The implication is that the policy of the government is to allow cherries to be imported from Italy in direct competition with cherries that could be produced and processed in the Kootenay valley. I am going to suggest to the minister that consideration