

Position of Agricultural Industry

Mr. Gardiner: Just because my hon. friend goes a long piece back he must not suppose that people have forgotten that we were not in power for two years in 1936. We only came into office about November 1, 1935.

Mr. Charlton: Of course, the Conservatives had only been in power for about that length of time but you blamed them for having a depression on their hands. Are you not taking credit for anything within the first two years?

Mr. Gardiner: You just got through saying that we had been in power for two years in 1936, but we had not.

Mr. Charlton: I am sorry; it was the second year.

Mr. Gardiner: As a matter of fact, we were still suffering from what the Conservatives did for five years.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Charlton: Mr. Speaker, before the last election in 1949 a great many statements were made by the minister and some were made by his parliamentary assistant. But as I said before, pre-election statements are generally quite different from post-election statements. I have here in my hand copies of Canadian Press releases of statements made by the minister. For instance, here is one of December 8, 1948:

In Ottawa today Agriculture Minister Gardiner announced that the United Kingdom has agreed to purchase next year (1949) 160 million pounds of Canadian bacon, 50 million pounds of cheese and 1,530,000 cases of shell eggs.

On April 11, 1949, another statement from a Canadian Press release:

Agriculture Minister Gardiner said Saturday that because Canadians were eating 100 per cent more pork products than in the prewar days Canada would be unable to fulfil her 160 million-pound bacon contract with Britain.

Again on May 19,—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Of what year?

Mr. Charlton:—1949, is another Canadian Press release which reads:

"The cheese contract with Britain was reduced to 50 million pounds after production in Canada had dropped following the war when dairy farmers found it more profitable to sell their milk for canning." Mr. Gardiner said Britain was prepared to take more "but we realized we might not be able to meet even this amount", Mr. Gardiner declared.

On May 30, 1949, again just previous to the election:

"Every country in the world, and particularly Britain, could take more of our food products if we had them to sell and particularly if these countries could pay," Mr. Gardiner said over the C.B.C. network.

On June 23, 1949, just previous to the election:

Agriculture minister Gardiner said tonight, "There is no evidence" to support the contention of C.C.F. leader Coldwell that Canada is losing the British food market. Mr. Gardiner said "the evidence is quite the opposite."

Then again on June 6—and this is another Canadian Press release of June 7 of a statement by the minister—we find this:

When critics of the government claim Canada is losing its overseas markets they don't know what they are talking about.

On May 20 of the same year, 1949, the parliamentary assistant had this to say, and I am quoting another Canadian Press report:

Our opponents would indicate that United Kingdom food contracts are going by the board. This is far from the truth. The United Kingdom would ask Canada to provide more bacon in 1950.

What was the statement after the election? This is interesting, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that on December 10, 1949, as reported at page 3087 of *Hansard*, we have the minister making this statement:

When we met with them—British government officials—in the fall of 1947—

And mind you, before all those other statements that I just read.

—they said they did not want our food products except wheat. The second time they visited us, in 1948, they included cheese,—

That they did not want.

—but they did not include cheese in 1947.

Mr. Gardiner: They included cheese that they did want, not that they did not want.

Mr. Charlton: Would the minister allow me to quote his own figures?

Mr. Diefenbaker: No; he does not want to hear them.

Mr. Gardiner: Those are not figures.

Mr. Charlton: The quotation continues:

They said: We prefer not to have these products. As a matter of fact, at certain stages they said they would not take these products, and at certain stages we said other things which induced them to take the products.

Then as reported at page 3221 of *Hansard* of March 23, 1953, in his speech the minister had this to say:

Since that time we have not been marketing food products in Britain because Britain told us in so many words that she was not going to buy from us.

A little farther down in the same page, in the same column we find this:

Mr. Diefenbaker: What did they say?

Mr. Gardiner: They said they did not want any of our food products except wheat.