

Supply—Agriculture

In my own constituency in the county of Essex we were told that there would be deficiency payments and floor prices not only for soya beans and sugar beets but for corn. We have not heard very much about whether or not we are going to have a floor price on corn, but from every indication arising out of statements made by the Minister of Agriculture as to the dangerous position that he sees gathering at the present time—

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): —not only is it not likely that we will receive a floor price on corn, but we are not likely to have a continuation of the existing floor prices on other commodities. Now, having completed that sentence I shall be glad to deal with my hon. friend's question.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Since the party of which my hon. friend is a member has not yet stated whether it is in full agreement with this brief, I wonder if the hon. gentleman would care to comment on it. I emphasize the words "full agreement".

Mr. Martin (Essex East): My hon. friend apparently has not seen the observations made by the leader of the Liberal party in the press—

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I read those observations.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): —at the time he received this delegation. The Leader of the Opposition indicated what was the position of the federal Liberal party in this matter. He referred to the resolutions which were publicized—unlike at a recent convention of the Tory party, in which that party stated its policy with regard to deficiency payments—and as the hon. member will know the delegation that met with the Leader of the Opposition and members of this party in a publicized statement expressed their deepest satisfaction with the way in which they had been received and the way in which the Liberal party had stated its position.

I have in my hand the briefs to which my hon. friend is referring. One is the submission by the interprovincial farm union council on agricultural policy generally. What is the government's reaction to this brief? Does my hon. friend say that these briefs, presented by a powerful farm organization in western Canada, are not to be treated as reflecting the state of public opinion in western Canada? Do these briefs indicate that 95 per cent of the farmers of western Canada support the policy of this government in the matter of deficiency payments? I suggest to my young and amiable hon. friend that he would be wise to make a

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

careful assessment of public opinion among the farmers of his riding. As a result of such an inquiry he would be required to revise his position in order to return to this house as an effective voice representing the farmers of western Canada.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): I was referring specifically to the submission of the western farm delegation to the Prime Minister presented at the Chateau Laurier. The hon. member has not answered my question.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I made mention of the fact that the farmers of southwestern Ontario had been assured of a support price for corn. As the Minister of Agriculture knows, he was requested by the corn growers a few months ago to designate corn as a commodity under the Agricultural Stabilization Act. The support price suggested was approximately \$1.45, which would be the average price for the last ten years for No. 2 dried corn delivered at elevators in the corn producing areas.

When the Minister of Agriculture replies I hope he will indicate what the policy of the government is in regard to this matter. I hope he will also indicate whether we are going to be confronted this year, with regard to the floor price on soya beans, with a situation comparable to that which has developed in the United States, where the floor price on soya beans is being reduced by 25 per cent. Is that going to be the situation in Canada?

The present floor price on soya beans is \$2.10. This does not mean that every farmer who grows soya beans receives \$2.10. Because of the method of averaging prices many farmers will receive well below \$2.10, and many who are in the position of not requiring assistance will receive the floor price. This averaging is regarded by the soya bean growers generally as not being fully in conformity with the assurances given by this government that there would be a floor price on soya beans.

Mr. Harkness: May I ask the hon. member a question? Has he asked the soya bean growers if they are willing to pool their returns? If they are willing to do this we can give them all exactly the same return, but up to date they have been unwilling to pool their returns. If they refuse to do so it is impossible to get away from the situation the hon. member describes.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The farmers certainly are not willing to pool their returns. That is the very gist of my complaint. When hon. gentlemen opposite during the election campaign said they were going to grant a