

Mr. GARDINER: The boards referred to have to do with marketing. There is an item here on marketing which covers all the marketing activities of the department. It consists of the same people who are on the boards that cover the question of marketing as related to the war. Items 22, 23, 24, 25 and all the way down have to do with that. Subsidies come under item 25; subsidies come under cold storage, and there are subsidies under the others. I would suggest that it would expedite the discussion if we tried to conduct all our discussions on marketing under the marketing items, even where it covers boards which are concerned with marketing; otherwise we shall discuss it two or three times.

Mr. SENN: What about the activities of the agricultural supplies board? Would those come under production, or where? We want to have a definite understanding; that is all.

Mr. GARDINER: I think the items of the supplies board would properly come under production, but I might say that I do not think it would be possible for me to suggest that items having to do with dairy products in the supplies board could not be discussed when we are discussing dairy products; the items are so closely interwoven I do not think it is possible to discuss one without the other. All our activities during the war relating to the production of dairy products have been associated with the agreements which were made by the supplies board in the early part of the war, or by some subcommittee of the supplies board.

Mr. BRACKEN: Has the minister given consideration to making a general statement with respect to these estimates? I am not raising any new policy. Some of the ministers have made such a general statement, and I was wondering whether the Minister of Agriculture was going to do the same thing.

Mr. GARDINER: I was not considering making any long general statement with regard to the estimates. I have found by experience here during the past ten years that when one does that he usually has to make ten other speeches covering different parts of his estimates as he goes along. I am quite prepared to make a speech at any time, and could make one on agriculture now if necessary, but I hope it is not necessary. I should like the members of the committee to feel free to make any suggestions they wish and any speeches they wish and to ask any questions they desire, and I shall try to answer them if at all possible.

Mr. CHARLTON: I should like to make a few general remarks while we are on item 1. First of all, I should like to congratulate the farmers of this great dominion upon a most difficult job well done. During the past two years I believe that most farmers have been fairly well satisfied with prices of farm products, thanks to the subsidies paid through the minister, the officials of his department, and the Commodity Prices Stabilization corporation.

At the beginning of the war farmers, remembering what had happened during world war I, had their hopes built high that they might have an opportunity to get back a few of the dollars they had lost during the nineteen-thirties. But what happened? In the fall of 1941 all prices were frozen at a very great disadvantage to the primary producer, because the commodities and services used by farmers had already risen considerably. I should like to quote a few figures from the *Economic Annalist* to verify those remarks. The wholesale prices are taken as of 1926 at 100. In 1937 the wholesale price of all commodities was at 84.6; in 1941, 89.9; and as of the last available figure including everything, 103.0. It will be noticed that there is a great variation in all these figures with the exception of one. In 1937, farm products were only 87.1. In 1941 they had dropped to 71.2, at the very time when these prices were frozen. The relation of farm produce prices as of the 1926 figures, taking 100 as the base, was 87.1 in 1937 and 71.2 in 1941. The last available figure for May, 1945, showed that it had risen to 104.6.

Let me take field products. In 1937, they stood at 88.3; in 1941 they were 56.5. There is a great reduction there; yet that price was the basic price when prices were frozen in the fall of 1941. What about animal products? This is the one exception. In 1937 the price was 85; in 1941 it had risen to 95.8, while in May, 1945, it had reached the figure of 121.1.

We now come to the cost of living. These figures are based on the average from 1935 to 1939 and the base is 100. The urban living costs in 1937 were 101.2; in 1941, they were 111.8; and in May, 1945, they had risen to 119. Farm living costs based on the same figures show that in 1937 the average was 102.9. In 1941 it had risen to 114.2. The last available figure for May, 1945, shows that it stood at 125.5.

We now come to the commodities and services used by farmers, and comparing the two figures, again the average of 1935 to 1939, we find that in 1937 it stood at 105.4; 1941, 114.1; and in May of this year it had risen to 142.