

Supply—Agriculture

and Montreal are paying up to \$6 a box for fancy and extra fancy packed apples on which the grower loses an average of close to 50 cents a box. I know it is a complicated question. I am not one to get up here and ask for everything under the sun or under the moon, but in view of the consideration other sections of agriculture receive from the federal government I do think a little more consideration should be extended to the fruit grower, whether he is in British Columbia, Ontario or Nova Scotia. I cannot see any relationship between the government's consideration of the problems of one section of agriculture compared with their consideration of the problems of the tree fruit growers in particular.

In British Columbia a royal commission established by the provincial government is studying the whole question of costs and other problems of the fruit industry. I welcome it. I was very glad to see that a delegation has gone to New Zealand to investigate the packing of fruit, and I was very glad to see that the minister's department has sent a representative with that delegation and to note that to that extent there is some co-operation.

But in view of the investigation by the royal commission and the circumstances of the fruit growers as related to agriculture as a whole—and again I want to see them all receive justice—I have been asked to urge the minister once more to see if the board cannot give further consideration to this very modest application for assistance of about 25 cents per box on the 1955 crop.

Mr. Gardiner: I should like to make a few remarks with regard to apples. In the first place I should like to say to the hon. member that when Dean Shaw noticed the hon. member the other day he said to me, "I went to agricultural college with that fellow, and I am very proud of the fact that he is here as a member." I just want the hon. member to know that Mr. Shaw has very kindly feelings toward him because of their old college days together.

Mr. Herridge: So have I for him.

Mr. Gardiner: Of course the letter of Mr. Shaw which he has just read does not carry with it any personal feelings, either with regard to the apple industry or to my hon. friend.

Mr. Herridge: I presume it reflects the minister's feelings.

Mr. Gardiner: On the other hand, my hon. friend thought I knew something about wheat and something about cattle but maybe I did not know much about apples. As a matter of

[Mr. Herridge.]

fact one of the reasons I am out west now and not in the east is that I knew too much about apples in the east. I might tell him about my last experience, which I think was even a little more difficult than the one he is having now in British Columbia. Not mentioning the town at the moment, I thought I should like to go to the fair; and as I did not have any other way of getting there I picked up some apples, put them in bags and loaded a double box wagon.

I took them to the place where I thought I was most likely to sell them, which was not the town where the fair was held. I spent quite a bit of the day trying to sell them, and I could not. So I drove to the town where the fair was, and I could not sell them there either. I took them over to the cider mill, dumped them off there and told the man to do what he liked with them. I did not even get a drink of cider for them.

There have been difficulties down in the western part of Ontario. There were some of the finest apple orchards in that locality that one would find anywhere. If you go down and look for them today you will have difficulty in finding them. The farmers have done away with them, or the orchards have disappeared as a result of the lack of proper care. So we have not an apple industry there. There are a great many people in eastern Canada who have had a rather long experience growing apples and successfully marketing them, so they will have some ideas with regard to it.

It was thinking back to some of these memories that caused some of us, including Dean Shaw, myself and others, to evolve a policy which brought about the payment of this amount for apples. The policy was set out in these words:

In the fall of 1955 Nova Scotia apple growers approached the board—

That is the agricultural prices support board.

—for assistance, and after discussions in which certain proposed plans were rejected, the government on January 5, 1956, with amendments on March 29, 1956, authorized the board to make up the difference between the average price for apples of fancy grade or better, delivered warehouse in Nova Scotia, and one cent per pound to producers in Nova Scotia, on the basis of six varieties named as follows: Gravenstein, McIntosh, Cortland, Wagener, Spy and King. It was indicated in the press announcement that if any other province—

This included British Columbia.

—could show that their growers received an average price for a number of dessert varieties of fancy grade or better below one cent per pound delivered warehouse, similar to Nova Scotia, the government would consider a further authorization for such provinces. Actual costs in connection with the 1955 apple production program were not incurred by the board in the fiscal year ending March 31, 1956.