

Agricultural Products Act

Mr. Fulton: How about that long table you had?

Mr. Gardiner: If I gave you all those figures you would be making speeches for the rest of your life. To continue, I say that up to that time we were attempting to increase production in order to prove to the British that we could supply them with a much greater proportion of their requirements than they had been obtaining from us prior to the war. Then I went on to say that when victory was assured there was a change in the policy; they indicated to us that they would have to carry out some of their agreements with European countries after the war was over, and that therefore they might not be able to continue to take the quantities we were then supplying. We knew, of course, that we would not be able to maintain after the war the level of exports we had been sending Britain during the war; because no matter how much my hon. friends may think I like to have the authority contained in this legislation, I want to say to them that it is a most difficult thing to use that authority even if you desire to do so, and I do not desire to use it except where it is absolutely necessary. Then I went on to say:

All of our discussions on food bulk contracts were proceeding satisfactorily until difficulties arose in adjusting the relationship between dollars and sterling.

As Sir Stafford Cripps states, it was in 1947 that those difficulties arose.

We were aiming at being able to provide the United Kingdom with 350 million pounds of bacon, 125 million pounds of cheese, 75 million dozens of eggs and having 400,000 head of cattle which we could dispose of either to the United States or the United Kingdom. We could provide all the requirements of the United Kingdom for wheat and much of the needed barley and oats if long-time contracts could be agreed to. It was our hope that you would agree to take these quantities and we would be prepared to accept returns for them which would bear a reasonable relationship to the returns which are being provided to your own farmers. Canada and Britain are linked in tradition. Canada and Britain are one in their hopes for the future. We were just beginning to think that at last our common sorrows growing out of war were going to result in lasting joy when the root of all evil "money" entered.

That will answer the question which was asked me by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) this afternoon, as far as I can answer it at the moment. That explanation was accepted in Britain, and it is the explanation that is accepted by Sir Stafford Cripps in his statement. The difficulties in connection with converting dollars to sterling and sterling to dollars are matters we in this country cannot overcome. My only fear is that if they are not overcome by some means, in spite of anything we can do about it and until in some way an arrange-

ment or agreement is reached, or something develops which secures the balance which is required, we may have some little trouble for some time in marketing our products. I repeat that the only way to maintain our position in a market where our customers are having difficulty in financing is to assist them to the greatest extent possible. When we have done that, Mr. Speaker, I think we will have accomplished sufficient to warrant that, when we have more of these products to sell and when our friends on the other side have more of the wherewithal to pay for them, we will be able to get back into that market to the extent that we have food products to sell. I hope we will have far more of them than we have at the present time when that time arrives.

Mr. Coldwell: I am rising on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I did not want to interrupt the minister, who has given, I believe, a very clear statement. It is certainly a vindication of the controls that have been exercised. I did want to say, Mr. Speaker, that before he completed his remarks the minister had spoken for an hour and two minutes. I think if all members are to be treated fairly, when the forty minutes are up that fact should be indicated.

Mr. Gardiner: I am sorry. I did not know I was speaking that long.

Mr. Coldwell: I know, and I am just drawing that to the attention of the house generally, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Diefenbaker: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the minister now table the ten pages to which the member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) made reference, instead of providing only a selected list.

Mr. Gardiner: The ten pages? Oh, you mean the figures. I will give you the whole of it, and you can select what you like.

The house divided on the motion (Mr. Gardiner) which was agreed to on the following division:

YEAS

Messrs:

Abbott	Blackmore
Archibald	Blanchette
Argue	Boivin
Arsenault	Boucher
Ashby	Bowerman
Baker	Bradette
Beaudoin	Brown
Belzile	Brunelle
Benidickson	Bryce
Bentley	Burton
Bertrand (Laurier)	Campbell
Bertrand (Prescott)	Castleden
Black (Chateauguay- Huntingdon)	Chevrier
	Claxton