

*Agricultural Products Board*

been saying that we ought to do the same. Here is what they decided and announced on November 30, very recently:

Promising as much help as possible, the department said it would be prepared to support producer prices of corn, cotton, wheat, rice, soybeans, wool, milk and butterfat at maximum levels permitted by law. That level is 90 per cent of parity.

However, no supports were promised for hogs, beef cattle, poultry, eggs and other perishable products. None of these products is being supported this year.

I just read that in order to give the latest information that is available on it in order to indicate that the policy which is being advocated by some was followed in the United States, and they have come to the conclusion that they cannot carry on with that policy with perishable products any further. The products we are discussing here this afternoon are largely in that class. If I may say so, our policy has worked out better than the policy followed in the United States.

**Mr. Wright:** In answer to that I would just say that in Canada we have not one agricultural product at the present time supported by a parity price. At least they have a few in the United States, the major products. The minister still has not answered my question as to whether the representatives of the egg producers asked for anything more than the 38 cents guaranteed to the packers or others who had eggs to deliver at the end of the year.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Some asked for 42 cents the year we first set it at 38 cents, and we set it at 38 cents. They all came back at the end of the year and said it had worked satisfactorily, and asked us to re-establish it just as it was. A few people have been writing in this year and saying that it should be 42 cents, and actually a few had it up to 43 cents. But in so far as the general producers and handlers of eggs are concerned, no general representation has been made that it should be changed, and we are leaving it as it is.

**Mr. Fair:** After listening to the discussion during the last ten or fifteen minutes I should like to ask the minister whether I am correct in assuming that at the present time there is no producer floor price for eggs?

**Mr. Gardiner:** There is a system which is being followed in handling eggs which has resulted in the farmer having the highest price for his eggs in the last eleven months that he ever obtained in any eleven months of any year.

**Mr. Fair:** That is all gone by. What of the future?

**Mr. Gardiner:** It is not a matter of how it is done; it is a matter of what results from what is done.

[Mr. Gardiner.]

**Mr. Fair:** There is no guaranteed floor price for the producer for the remainder of the present year? That would be correct, would it not? There is no reply.

**Mr. Gardiner:** It would not be correct.

**Mr. Knowles:** Does this section of the bill or any other section give the agricultural products board power to be the exclusive importer of butter from abroad?

**Mr. Gardiner:** The government has authority under other measures to take that action, and the government has taken it.

**Mr. Knowles:** That is exactly the point that is in my mind. I take it from the minister's avoidance of my direct question that there is no power given in this bill to the agricultural products board to be the exclusive importer of butter; but it so happens that by an order that became effective on August 1, 1951, that is the situation at the present time. The minister now tells me that that action was taken under other powers enjoyed by the government. I gathered from what he said earlier in the debate today that that power is derived from the Emergency Powers Act which was passed at the last session of parliament. It now appears, Mr. Chairman, that the government is already doing, without this bill, more than it is going to be able to do under the bill. I begin to wonder what the reason for the bill is, if that is the situation.

I would be glad if the minister would pursue the other question a little further and explain it to me. For example, I hold in my hand a copy of *Foreign Trade*, a publication put out by the Department of Trade and Commerce. This is the issue of September 22, 1951. I read a bit from page 415:

\* In addition to the purchases of butter by the agricultural products board, the trade has been given import permits for approximately 4½ million pounds of butter from certain European countries, because contracts had been made by the trade prior to August 1, the date on which the government took control of the imports of butter.

Was that done by the agricultural products board? Was it done on the advice of the Minister of Agriculture, or was it done on the advice of the Minister of Trade and Commerce? What is the relationship between the way in which the agricultural products board seems to have been working when it has not had a statute, and the way it will now work when this statute is passed?

**Mr. Gardiner:** The position in relation to these matters is exactly as I stated it at the beginning. In the first place, I stated to the house on the resolution that we are asking the house to put in the form of legislation the same authorities and powers as were taken