

Agricultural Prices Support Act

and that they accepted lower prices during the war, and in many instances since the war. Farmers made that sacrifice in the belief that a proper permanent stabilization program would be adopted. How many hundreds of millions of dollars the wheat producers have sacrificed, I do not know. I do not think anyone else knows, but I do know that because of the government's policy of keeping bread prices down in this country, and signing a British contract which hon. members on all sides of the house supported, farmers in western Canada took substantially less for their wheat than might have been received. But the very fact that in the past farmers have accepted less for their products—and in the last few years farmers have made a real contribution to the whole Canadian nation by providing food at reasonable prices—is an indication that they have a just cause when they ask the government to inaugurate a policy which will give them adequate floor prices in peacetime, and when they ask the rest of the nation, if necessary, to provide the money required in order that stabilized prices may be maintained.

The minister is going to have a great deal of difficulty in selling a price-support program to the Canadian nation which results in merely a piling up of surpluses in Canada. We cannot sell that kind of program to the Canadian people. It is not enough to set floor prices. We must move food into consumption channels, and into trade channels throughout the world. I suggest to the minister once again that, along with his colleagues, he explore the possibilities of implementing bilateral trade agreements not only for the sale of agricultural commodities to other nations of the world, but for the importation of manufactured commodities into Canada.

I suggest to the minister and to the government that they might well consider the possibility of accepting sterling in payment of farm products sent to Great Britain. It is not right, it is not just, that we should be piling up surpluses of agricultural commodities in Canada when there are hungry people in the world. We are trying to sell democracy to the world but you cannot sell democracy to a man who is hungry. The United States is trying to sell democracy to every nation in the world. But in my opinion they cannot sell democracy to nations in which millions of people are hungry at the very time when in the United States they have \$4,000 million of agricultural surpluses. To summarize I suggest that the government place in the present act a proper formula that will give farmers stability year in and year out, and then take all the necessary

steps to see that Canadian agricultural products find their way into the markets of the world, so that we may make our contribution toward feeding mankind.

Mr. Robert Fair (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, we are told that the Right Hon. Winston Churchill a few years ago said that it is just as healthy for a man to change his mind as it is to change his shirt. I am glad that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) and the government have seen fit to change their opinions with regard to the resolution that was on the order paper last session in connection with the Agricultural Prices Support Act, and which died there. At that time we were afraid that the government was going to do away with this legislation. Perhaps because of the minister's travels throughout Canada he found that the people of Canada, farmers, business people, labouring people and others, were not satisfied to do away with the legislation. I am glad that the resolution we are discussing at the present time is on the order paper and that very soon we shall have a permanent Agricultural Prices Support Act on our statute books.

I am just a little worried that the agricultural industry is again being relegated to a place which it should not occupy, namely, to the position of Cinderella. With the assistance of the government, many other industries seem to be able to take care of themselves. While agriculture was boosted to the skies during the war for the effort it was putting forth at that time, not enough is said at this time about the efforts put forth by the farmers of Canada and of the actual losses they have sustained because of government policy. Because of that, something really worth while should now be done to keep agriculture in a prosperous condition.

In the past few months we have heard leaders of labour organizations advocate that a healthy policy be made effective for the industry of agriculture. These men are finally beginning to realize, as they should have done many years ago, that just as soon as the farmer has not got money labourers will commence to walk the streets, because the farmers cannot buy the products of industry. They are also beginning to realize that the best potential customer the manufacturer and others in Canada have is our own Canadian farming population. I believe that was made clear also to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture at its meeting at Niagara Falls recently by the Minister of Agriculture. I hope that others in high places will soon take cognizance of this fact and do something about it.