

would not try to prophesy what will happen between now and 1956. We are setting up this board to keep track of what happens.

Mr. PERLEY: That is what I wanted the minister to admit, because I think he was trying to suggest that the previous government was more or less responsible for prices in 1930.

Mr. GARDINER: No. If I had wished to make that suggestion I would have said so. My hon. friend is emphasizing the fact. I did not blame that upon the government, and did not suggest it. I have sent to my office for as many copies of these tables as are available. They are in print; anyone could have them in the same way that I received them. I have put them on record every session since I have been here. Hon. members may see the figures for themselves.

Mr. PERLEY: I just wanted to bring that point to the attention of the house. The government of that period has been greatly criticized in connection with the low prices of farm products, and I have always contended that the government was not responsible, that it was during the years prior to 1930 that conditions arose which brought about that situation. The depression and the low prices did not occur only in Canada; they were all over the world. I just wanted to make that comment in passing.

The minister has said the board will consist of three members, with a permanent chairman. I am quite in agreement with that; we must have a board consisting of at least three. He referred also to the advisory committee, on which he said there would be proper representation. He also pointed out that it would be impossible to have the producers of all commodities represented, and I am in agreement with him there. But I would express the hope that this advisory committee will function more successfully than the advisory committee to the wheat board. In that case we have three members constituting the wheat board, who do not take the advice of the advisory committee. In the present instance the minister says there are to be twelve members of the advisory committee, which is a fairly large number. I hope he will see that the producers of western Canada are properly represented. The board is to consist of two officials, with a permanent chairman. We are not told who is to be the chairman, but some people have surmised who he may be, and if the gentleman I have in mind is appointed I think he can do a good job. I do hope, however, this board

will take the advice of the advisory committee. Just in passing, in reading over the bill I see the minister has retained almost complete control himself.

The minister dealt with the question of export trade after the war, and at that point referred to the fact that while this bill was forecast in the speech from the throne in January, a Liberal convention was held in this city last fall at which certain suggestions were made to the government. I believe the minister is trying to take a little credit for the fact that the government has accepted some of those suggestions and is putting them in the form of legislation.

Mr. WARD: Are you opposed to the bill?

Mr. PERLEY: Not at all. If the hon. member will just keep quiet I will tell him my position. I should like to remind the minister that in December of 1942 a convention was held in the city of Winnipeg at which a policy was drawn up dealing among other things with agriculture. If he will look over that policy he will discover that it contains many suggestions which under this legislation the board will have power to carry into effect.

Mr. GARDINER: That is what the Conservative party always do; they finally advocate what the Liberals who bring in these things have been advocating.

Mr. PERLEY: Then the minister will admit that a year before the Liberals met in Ottawa the Conservatives drew up a programme containing nine or ten proposals with respect to agriculture. I commend that policy to the minister, for it also advocates the setting up of a board such as this. That policy will be put into force at the first opportunity, which may come sooner than many of us think. The first item of that agricultural policy is:

To consult and enlist the assistance of agricultural interests in formulating and putting into effect policies for the promotion of the welfare of agriculture;

That might cover the advisory committee. The next recommendation is that farm prices be maintained which will give farmers a monetary return bearing a fair relationship to the cost of production.

The minister went on to speak of the increased return to the farmers in recent years. There is no particular point to be made there. We have had a war on; the prices of farm products all over the world have been increased, and it is only natural that the incomes of our farmers should have