

Agricultural Prices Support Act

million used for wheat were diverted for the purchase of apples. Somehow or other I find this fault not only on the part of the government but on the part of officials and trade commissioners. Our trade commissioners are bright boys when it comes to selling industrial products; but it is my opinion that our trade commissioners are not as active and are not as keen, when it comes to selling agricultural products, and they do not understand the selling of agricultural products to the same extent that they understand the selling of industrial products. I ask the government to give consideration to the possibility of marketing Canadian apples next year by the use of some of these funds that are provided for wheat or by the acceptance of sterling, and the possibility of re-investment of that sterling in undeveloped areas.

I support the request of the British Columbia fruit growers' association for financial assistance from this government under this legislation. The resolution was read this afternoon by the hon. member for Yale (Mr. Jones) and I am not going to repeat it. But without question—and I am quite sure the minister would agree with this—the fruit growers of British Columbia have been a patient group throughout the years in presenting their problems to this government. The minister knows that even during the war when we could have obtained from \$1 to \$3 more for cherries our organization—that is, the fruit growers' organization—voluntarily said "No, this is too high a price". There was a terrific demand. They willingly accepted a lower price on cherries and other fruits in order to keep customer good will and to serve the Canadian people at a reasonable price because they considered that the grower was getting a satisfactory price, and that is all they want. I think that the fruit industry's record in that respect is excellent. It has always taken a constructive approach. It has never pressed the government for assistance unless it was in a serious position. The fruit industry in British Columbia is in a serious condition at this time and I urge the government to give consideration to their requests and to their resolution.

I have on my desk a statement of a grower that I know in my own district, at Deer Park on the Arrow lakes. He is a small fruit grower who has made a reasonable living for the last few years. He sends me this statement which shows his returns for some of the fruit produced on his five-acre orchard this year. His return for this year shows that he is in the red on that production to the extent of \$241.49. That is going to be the experience of a good number of growers in our district, and in British Columbia generally, unless some assistance is given by this government.

[Mr. Herridge.]

Spraying costs, farm machinery costs, and box costs are going up. For instance, in 1939 we were paying 12 cents per box for apple boxes from the factory. Today we are paying 33.2 cents per box. Freight, machinery, sprays, fertilizers, boxes, all commodities, are going up while prices have dropped rather rapidly.

In conclusion, therefore, I urge the minister and the government to give consideration to this large industry which requires some support at this time in order to get through the present difficulty; and also to give consideration to plans such as those I have suggested in my few remarks, with a view to stabilizing the industry in the years to come. Immediate assistance in the present difficulty, long-term policies on the basis of commodity agreements, and the other arrangements I have mentioned, will I think do a great deal to bring a sense of security to the agriculturists and to the fruit growers now and in the days to come.

Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon): I may say, Mr. Speaker, that when I came down here I had no intention at all of entering this debate. I had hoped to listen to my hon. and agriculturist friends express their opinions. But I was greatly interested in the remark made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) and I thought it would be only right to remind him that there are places in the world where money is not necessarily the only consideration. There are places where men's votes and influence depend on other things than their position of wealth or economic prosperity. If the Minister of Trade and Commerce had been brought up in the north of Ireland, as I was, he would know that there is a group of people there who will vote Conservative or, as they call it, Unionist, and would so vote even if the hens laid three eggs a day.

Now that I am on my feet, I might say a word or two about the subject under discussion, namely, the continuation of these two agricultural support acts. I should like to add a word of my own testimony to what has been said by the leader of our party about farm affairs overseas.

Some doubt was expressed by someone on the other side of the house as to the accuracy of some of his statements about the prosperity of the farmer in Europe, and particularly in Britain. It was my pleasure to observe that at first hand about a year ago, and I should like to bear witness to it. However, for the moment I want to say that one of the results of our not trading with Europe and with Britain is that the people over there have been compelled to increase their own