

Supply—Agriculture

there will be no effective floor price under the market. The hogs will be dumped on the market as they come in, and the market will find its own level. Whatever production there may be in the hands of these great producers, plus the production in the hands of the ordinary farmer, all of it will go on the market, and the effective floor will be reduced through this technique from \$25 to \$23.65.

Mr. Harkness: Not by this technique, excuse me. For the next six months the floor will remain at \$25 and I would think at least for two months of the period when the floor is at \$25 the deficiency method of maintaining that floor will be in effect.

Mr. Argue: The floor will be removed from the market and the price will be allowed to go any place it wishes. In so far as the individual producer is concerned, he can pick up the difference by way of cheques from the minister.

The great danger in this policy, and I hope the minister has considered this carefully, is that a glut of hogs on the market will so force down the price for pork that it will tumble the price for beef; that is the danger that is in the mind of the agriculture producer in this country. How low does the price of pork have to go before thousands of housewives instead of buying higher priced beef will buy a cheaper cut of pork? One result may be a reduction in beef prices, and perhaps a reduction even in broiler prices—although I do not know how they could go much lower—and a general reduction in the prices of meat products.

This is a great danger in the minister's policy, and I think he should have another look at it because this is the kind of policy which may result in a deterioration in the cattle industry and the livestock industry generally. I hope that the government is still considering the request of farm organizations for deficiency payments. I was most disappointed in the statement the minister made on the radio before the delegation came to Ottawa. I hope he now does not believe what he then said; I hope he still does not stand by what he said in that broadcast because I think he was in error. I hope his reply today, by reading a letter from one farmer, is not a method by which the government is saying no to deficiency payments.

If the minister would stand up now and say the government is reconsidering the position the minister took in his radio speech, I would be most pleased. I am very sorry to say that a full month has gone by without any indication whatever of which I know that the government is giving serious consideration to the question of deficiency payments.

[Mr. Argue.]

The minister went out of his way, before the delegation came, to damn their case. In view of his statement today, I regret to say that apparently the presentation of this brief by the delegation has not been successful in any way in changing the minister's mind. The delegation, in my opinion, was an excellent one. It had an excellent brief and I trust that the government may yet take action on this very important matter so that the agriculture industry across Canada will not suffer great deterioration in the coming year. I see it is five o'clock.

Mr. McIntosh: Before the house leaves the business of this department—

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, I had the floor and called it five o'clock.

Mr. McIntosh: This is a question of privilege; before the house leaves the business of this department may I have permission to ask the minister a question which concerns only my constituency?

The Deputy Chairman: Does the committee agree to allow the hon. member to ask the minister a question?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. McIntosh: Order in council P.C. 1958-2/1358 was approved on October 2, 1958 and provided for the construction of what is known as the Altawan reservoir in the south-western part of Saskatchewan. Would the minister make a statement concerning when tenders will be called for this project? If they are called at an early date, could construction be commenced as soon as possible so that the project may be completed this year?

Mr. Harkness: Tenders for this project were called last fall, but the conditions were such that the respective contractors could not get out to examine the ground and therefore tenders had to be withdrawn. They will be reissued again in a few weeks' time and I expect as a result we will be able to get construction started fairly rapidly this spring.

Progress reported.

PRIVATE BILLS

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE—THIRD READING

Bill S-16, to incorporate Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd.—Mr. Rynard.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

PROVISION OF STATUTORY HOLIDAYS WITH PAY FOR EMPLOYEES

Mr. Erhart Regier (Burnaby-Coquitlam) moved the second reading of Bill C-7, to