

Agricultural Products Board

that can be produced, and I think we are successful. The hon. member goes on:

In my opinion, such a step would foster unity in Canada, because it would show, in a practical way, that there exists, in critical times, a national solidarity among the various parts of this country.

The gun is heavily loaded against western agriculture at the present time. No doubt the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency is eating bread made from western Canadian wheat and he should realize by this time that the western wheat grower is subsidizing him and all other consumers in Canada to the extent of 50 cents per bushel so they may have that good cheap bread. He goes on:

National unity should work both ways; since each year taxpayers in eastern Canada make sacrifices to help the western wheat growers, the latter should also make some concessions to their fellow countrymen of the east.

No doubt the hon. member is referring to the \$65 million which has been talked about so much, sometimes by people who do not know what they are talking about. I think the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency can be included in that group. When we were discussing the \$65 million it was brought out that the western wheat farmer had lost 32 cents per bushel on that deal, or approximately \$137 million, in order to supply cheap wheat to the people of Canada during the period 1946-49. The hon. member continued:

The greed and selfishness of certain western meat producers at the present time will bring about, sooner or later, reprisals from the east.

I do not think it is necessary to say anything more except that people who do not understand what they are talking about should learn something about their subject before making statements of that kind.

On Monday, October 29, the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Balcer) made the following statement, as reported on page 491 of *Hansard*:

Again I urge the government to prohibit immediately all meat exports to the United States, so that the price of beef, for instance, which is a basic food, may return to a level that would be commensurate with the income of the average Canadian, while still enabling western cattle breeders to make a reasonable profit. As long as we export our meat to the United States where salaries are much higher than in Canada, our fellow citizens will have to go without meat or pay excessive prices.

Our choicest meat is sent across the border and horse meat is the only kind available at reasonable prices in Canada.

The situation is such today that it costs less to buy beef from cattle slaughtered in Argentina, exported to Britain and tinned there, then re-exported to Canada, than it is to buy beef from our own Canadian west. This is a ridiculous situation. The government is duty-bound to react and to leave no stone unturned in order to put an end to it.

There is another case where the hon. member does not understand what he is talking about. If he knows anything about the

[Mr. Fair.]

grade of beef that you get in a can, he will realize that it is the same type that is produced and canned in his own province. It is about the same quality as the animal that has raised two or three families and then when it is all through is slaughtered and put in a can. When the hon. member gets quality meat from western Canada he should be satisfied to pay for it. I would point out that during the depression years 1930-40 the farmers in western Canada were selling beef for one cent a pound. At that time we did not hear the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency or the hon. member for Three Rivers ask for an increase in the price to a level which would be near the cost of production. They should get a little history into their heads and then perhaps they could talk with some common sense in the house.

We must realize that something is wrong with our agricultural program in Canada when we have to import butter and eggs. Last year we heard many complaints from people in different parts of the country about the price they had to pay for butter. I hope the action being taken at this time by the minister will prevent such things happening again. I realize that people on low salaries cannot pay one dollar a pound for butter under present conditions.

We must establish parity prices for agricultural products in Canada. Across the line they have had parity prices for a number of years. We in Canada seem to be fond of following their programs in the United States but from year to year we hesitate to follow their lead in formulating a parity price program.

I suggest to the minister that he should have written into the Agricultural Prices Support Act a formula to provide parity prices for agricultural products. In doing that we should not go back to the depression years of 1930-40. If that is done we shall not be any better off with our Agricultural Prices Support Act and our agricultural products board than we have been in the past. The base period should be a period in which the farmers received a reasonable price for their product. If a formula on that basis is laid down in the Agricultural Prices Support Act the farmers of Canada will stand a chance of getting a fair deal, something which up to the present they have not received.

I am not going to say very much more, except to state that once again we have heard the farmers of Canada being blamed for the high cost of living. I believe the Prime Minister, when he spoke on the address