

*Supply—Agriculture*

**Mr. Montgomery:** Would that be on the starch program?

**Mr. Gardiner:** That was on the starch program.

**Mr. Montgomery:** The minister said 1954. They wound that up last year.

**Mr. Gardiner:** It was 1955 potatoes but it would be wound up in 1956.

**Mr. Montgomery:** You mentioned 1954.

**Mr. Gardiner:** 1954 for eggs but 1955 for potatoes. Maybe I said 1954. It is 1955.

**Mr. Herridge:** Mr. Chairman, I want to raise just for five minutes the question of price support for apples, which I am very sorry is not the cause for some of this supplementary estimate. I have raised the matter before, but I am raising it again tonight.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Part of this \$185,738 is for apples.

**Mr. Herridge:** Pardon me, not the apples I am talking about. I have raised the matter and I am raising it again at the request of a good number of members of the British Columbia fruit growers' association. If anyone wants to understand the position of the fruit grower throughout the years, all he has got to do is attend a fruit growers convention and a cattle growers' convention. When you go to the cattle grower's convention you find they are all well fed, paunchy and, on the whole, stocky people; but when you go to a fruit growers' convention you find that 90 per cent of them are long, lean and hungry looking like myself. That is the result of the economic circumstances of the fruit growers throughout the years.

The minister knows that quite recently representatives of the British Columbia fruit growers' association came to Ottawa and presented a brief to the agricultural prices support board asking for assistance to the extent of a minimum of 25 cents a box for the 1955 crop. I had the opportunity, with members of the other opposition parties and members of the government party, I think, to meet these gentlemen and listen to the whole story. I think anyone who is fair will say that their proposals were very modest, and I can say from personal experience that they were modest. They presented a very well drafted brief to the agricultural prices support board, and I am going to quote one paragraph. After going into the question of the need for price support they said:

And whereas returns for the 1955 crop paid to the packing houses averaged only \$2.0165 per box, which after deducting the existing packing, storage and growing costs, estimated to be \$2.50, represents a loss to growers of .4835 cents per box, or a loss substantially greater than that sustained in 1950, the British Columbia fruit growers' association

therefore, begs to submit the following statement in support of a request that the federal government consider and approve a minimum payment to the industry of 25 cents per box on the 1955 apple crop, calculated to offset at least partially the substantial losses suffered by the growers.

Their brief gave very sound arguments in support of their application. They also asked the various members of the house representing horticultural districts in which fruit is grown to correspond with the prices support board and extend their support for the proposals of the association, and I did so along with other members who met the representatives of the British Columbia fruit growers' association. This is the sort of letter I got back, addressed to myself:

February 21, 1957.

Dear Mr. Herridge,

This will acknowledge your letter of February 14 with respect to your support of the application of the British Columbia fruit growers' association.

This application has been carefully studied and after considering the various angles, including the fact that British Columbia growers received an average return for all apples of 72 cents per box—

They cost over \$2 a box to produce.

—as compared to 40 cents in Nova Scotia, 39 cents in Quebec and 66 cents in Ontario for the 1955 crop, the board has decided that their application cannot be recommended.

Yours very truly,  
A. M. Shaw,  
Chairman.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that in 1909 I played polo at Guelph with the gentleman who sent that letter, and I never dreamed that I would live to see the day when I would receive a letter of such an unsympathetic nature so far as horticulturists are concerned. The amazing argument that is found in the letter, Mr. Chairman, is that because we are not as poverty-stricken as the rest there is no reason to assist anyone. That is the argument in that letter.

I know the minister is a wheat and stock man, and his life history has been such that the cockles of his heart do not warm very quickly to the pleas of the fruit growers. However, I understand that on the average it costs about \$1.25 to produce a bushel of wheat on the prairies, and I support all efforts in the house on behalf of wheat growers. On the average the wheat producer receives something more than that amount. Here we have the fruit growers of British Columbia receiving the price I have mentioned for fruit that costs over \$2 a box to produce, involving a loss to the growers, according to their figures, of nearly 50 cents a box, and a greater loss to the growers according to the figures mentioned in this letter.

While we have these circumstances I notice that people in Ottawa, Toronto