

Supply—Agriculture

different phases of agriculture, and by which the farmer can be assured of a fair standard of living.

As I indicated earlier, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Agriculture did not deal with two very important subjects. In the last few months the western farmers have been quite concerned over two matters; first, the falling prices of hogs and the fact that in some instances they are getting lower prices than they believed and were told were the floor prices, and also in respect of the selling of eggs.

I want to deal first with the matter of floor prices for hogs. Perhaps I should first deal with a matter that came to my attention last year. I recall that the Minister of Agriculture spoke to the agricultural fair in the coliseum in Ottawa. In the course of his speech he had in his hands the presentation of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in which they asked for a flexible parity structure for Canadian agriculture. At that meeting the minister read from that brief and intimated that on each occasion the farmer was already receiving a flexible parity price, namely the 85 cents asked for by the federation at that time. Since that time the marketing and pricing of hogs has become more treacherous, and I think the western hog producer is realizing it may well be that he will not get the price which he has been told he is guaranteed under the floor price system of the federal government.

I have in my hand two copies of receipts from farmers who have shipped hogs to packing plants. One of them is from Burns and Company and the other is from the Swift Canadian Company. I want to say that I take exception to the way in which these receipts are filled out. The statement from Burns and Company illustrates that this farmer shipped four hogs and got a price of \$18.75 per hundredweight. The other receipt is for two grade A hogs for which the farmer received a price of \$18.85 per hundredweight. There is no indication on either receipt as to what the farmer paid in respect of freight, rucking, transit insurance, yardage, yard fire insurance, commission or prorating. All he has is a net statement made out in his name. I maintain it is quite impossible for a farmer to know whether or not he is receiving the floor price.

Recently in the house I asked the minister how a farmer should go about getting the floor price for his hogs and the minister replied, as recorded at page 708 of *Hansard*, that all the farmer has to do is take his receipt and send it to the prices board. Later on in answer to the question he said he would send the slip to the Department of Agriculture.

[Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain).]

I maintain, Mr. Chairman, that there are no floors to the producer of hogs in western Canada, and that under the policy of this government it is not living up to its undertaking to provide floor prices on hogs as guaranteed to farmers under the Agricultural Prices Support Act. This indicates to me that this government has been taking credit where no credit was due. Up to the present time we find that due to the demand for hogs there has been no move for any policy of federal support to come into play by which the government would of necessity have to provide floor prices for hogs.

In 1953 the so-called support price for hogs dropped from \$26 per hundredweight for grade A hogs to \$23 per hundredweight. We now have a situation where more pressure is being put on the market, and it would seem that farmers are getting a price below what they thought was the floor at Winnipeg, Regina, and Saskatoon. Under the Agricultural Prices Support Act this government has the power to provide adequate floor prices for the western hog producers. I am now asking this government to take some concrete action by which the hog producers will get a floor price in conformity with the cost of production.

There is no use having floor prices which are in the cellar, and there is no use having the so-called floor prices go down to a point where the Agricultural Prices Support Act will not come into play, and where the \$200 million provided under this act would not be used in order to support adequate prices for the hog producers. I maintain that so far as western Canada is concerned, and indeed in Canada as a whole, there are no floor prices as far as hog producers are concerned.

The same thing is true of eggs in this country. The other day I directed a question to the Minister of Agriculture concerning eggs. I referred to a newspaper account of a charge made by Charles Walls, secretary manager of the British Columbia federation of agriculture, that in his province egg inspectors have secret instructions which nobody but themselves are allowed to see. Mr. Walls said that the inspectors were inspecting eggs on such instructions rather than the printed regulations about which everybody knows.

Illustrating his point that uncertainty about floor prices each year ruined the good work they were supposed to do, Mr. Walls said that in that period this year in two centres the price of grade A large eggs had dropped 16 to 20 cents. That, Mr. Chairman, clearly indicates that there is no floor for the producer. I have tried to get as much—

Mr. Gardiner: Where were they when they started to drop?