

Agricultural Products Board

should. The minister made a statement in this house that in the setting of floor prices the government had regard to the prices which obtained between 1943 and 1945. Just a few minutes ago the minister put certain figures on the record, and I have some figures here in the form of a return. These figures show that in the years 1943-45 grade A eggs averaged 43 cents a dozen. The minister has told us that the government has set a floor price for the packers or buyers of those eggs—

Mr. Gardiner: That illustrates exactly what I said a moment ago. My friend is misinterpreting me—

Mr. Wright: Is the minister making a speech or stating a point of privilege?

Mr. Gardiner: I am speaking to a point of privilege.

Mr. Wright: Then perhaps you should say so.

Mr. Gardiner: I just stated that there is no floor under eggs. We are not setting a floor price there, from day to day as we do for butter. We are saying that we will buy any eggs that are in storage at the end of the year at 38 cents a dozen.

Mr. Wright: You are buying eggs at the end of the year that the packers may have in storage, or that anyone else has in storage, at 38 cents a dozen. In effect, that is setting a floor for the packers or the other people who have their eggs in storage.

Mr. Gardiner: Including the member for Melfort, if he has any.

Mr. Wright: There is no doubt about that, because you say you will purchase them at that price. This price bears no relationship to the statement that the 1943-45 period will be used in establishing floor prices for agricultural products. If the floor were established on that basis, the average price for those three years was 43 cents so the floor would be at least 60 per cent higher than that.

The minister has made the statement that he listened to the representations of the egg producers. He indicated to this house that they were satisfied with the 38 cents the government guaranteed to the packers at the end of the year. Did those people who made the representations on behalf of the producers not ask for anything more than that? Were they satisfied?

Mr. Gardiner: They did not say anything about the packers at all. We did not guarantee the packers.

Mr. Wright: That is not the question I asked. Were they satisfied with the 38 cents guaranteed to the packers?

Mr. Gardiner: You said more than that.

Mr. Wright: I am asking for an answer. Since there is no answer, I take it that the producers were not satisfied. But they would be satisfied if the minister put into practice what he stated should be the guiding principle of setting floor prices, that is using 1943-45 as a guide.

In this statement he has given me it says that British Columbia McIntosh apples averaged \$3.25 a box during that period. When it came time for the government to put a floor price under apples they certainly did not use the 1943-45 formula. The statement shows that Canada No. 1 potatoes averaged approximately \$2.40 during that period. If my memory serves me correctly, when the government placed a floor under New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island potatoes it was approximately 75 cents, and did not bear any relationship to these figures.

In this return which I have in my hand the support price in December of this year for Wiltshire sides at Montreal is quoted at \$31.04. I want the minister to tell me just how the disparity arose between the \$32.50 which he has been quoting and the \$31.04 which is shown on the return.

The Chairman: Shall the section carry?

Mr. Wright: No, I asked the minister certain questions. I want to know if he can explain these differences.

Mr. Gardiner: I do not think I should have to answer the question three or four times.

Mr. Wright: The minister has never answered this question, because it is the first time I have asked it.

Mr. Gardiner: If my hon. friend will read the statement I made a few moments ago he will find an answer to all the questions he has asked. When he asked for that return, if he had asked for all the information he is now asking about, he would have got that information. That was not what he asked for. He asked for prices, which would make it possible for him to use certain arguments. I have given the committee that information and it will be on *Hansard*, and I feel it will answer all that has been said with the possible exception of the reference to potatoes and apples. I might say in that regard that the price received by the producers of apples in those war years was to a very large extent the amount which was put up by the government to support the price at that time for certain reasons, as I indicated.

The other matter is quite different. In concluding my remarks on it I might answer what has been said and what was said previously by just reading what has been decided on the other side of the line. My friends have