

Agricultural Products Board

duction of legislation providing for the establishing of floor prices at such levels as to guarantee to producers a price-cost relationship not less favourable than that prevailing in the period 1943-1945.

As has been pointed out by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch), this is not the bill which you would amend if you were going to make that provision. The suggestion was made, both in the debate on second reading and in the debate on the resolution, that we were dealing with floor price legislation. I corrected that statement at the time we were discussing the resolution, and I repeat that this legislation has nothing to do with the matter. I think the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue) was out of order most of the time he was speaking on the second reading.

Section 9 (2) of the act which provides for floor prices provides the very thing which is suggested here in as plain language as could be used without setting up a formula as suggested by the hon. member for Assiniboia. This particular legislation does not do what has been suggested by the hon. member.

A moment ago the hon. member suggested that if the Minister of Agriculture wanted another board the house would be prepared to approve it. This bill actually does away with three boards and substitutes one in their place. It is not asking for another board. During the war and the transitional periods we had a board to handle dairy products, a board to handle meat products and a board to handle special products. This will constitute one board to take the place of those three.

Mr. Argue: Is it not true that those three boards went out of existence on March 31 of this year?

Mr. Gardiner: No, but those three boards will go out of existence as a result of what we are doing now. The three boards which were constituted during the war period were kept in existence until recently, and this is just a substitution. This board is being placed in a position to deal with matters that may be referred to it, matters that were previously dealt with by the three boards. It is perfectly true that only one thing has been given to it to deal with up to date, the purchase of butter. That butter is being brought in from outside Canada. They have not dealt in any way with the setting of floor prices.

The statements made by the hon. member for Assiniboia could be refuted, but I would probably be out of order if I attempted to do that, just as he was out of order in discussing what he did under this particular measure. If the amendment which has been moved had been passed in connection with the other act

[Mr. Gardiner.]

the facts would bear out by what has happened ever since the war down to the present time in relation to farm prices that what the member for Assiniboia contends should happen has happened. I have all the facts here in relation to it, and I can present them to the house. I do not think I would be in order to discuss them in detail now, but if hon. members desire to have the information I am quite prepared to give it when we get into committee.

I have information here which was prepared for the purpose of answering questions which have been asked within the last two or three days, and the statement I have in hand refutes one suggestion that was made with regard to eggs. It has been said by the member for Assiniboia that the price ought to be 60 cents per dozen if we are going to have a price which would bear out the suggestion made with regard to the relationship to earlier prices in 1943, 1944 and 1945. Actually the average price over the last eleven months at Montreal has been 67 cents, or 7 cents better than the hon. member says it ought to be.

One could go through the whole range of commodities and show a similar condition as having existed in connection with prices, but I say again that I do not think I would be in order to do that on the second reading of this bill. I suggest to you that the amendment really is not one which refers to this bill but rather to another act entirely, and as such should be declared out of order.

Mr. Blackmore: Were the prices at Montreal mentioned by the minister the prices to the producer or to the consumer?

Mr. Gardiner: The average wholesale market price for grade A large eggs at Montreal for 1950 was 51.5 cents per dozen and for the first eleven months of 1951 the average price was 67.4 cents per dozen. It was the wholesale price.

Mr. P. E. Wright (Melfort): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the minister that the amendment is not worded in such a way as to ask for an amendment to this particular bill. It reads:

That Bill No. 18 be not now read a second time but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this house consideration should be given to the introduction of legislation providing for the establishing of floor prices at such levels as to guarantee to producers a price-cost relationship not less favourable than that prevailing in the period 1943-45.

That simply sets out the principle we want the government to accept, and which the minister has at times said in this house they were prepared to accept. All this does is