

Agricultural Products Board

They do not treat government grants lightly. I shall quote the figures of the distribution. They made arrangements for a joint committee of the British Columbia fruit growers association and Tree Fruits Limited to distribute this money. I want to mention this to indicate the care given in their calculations. Extra fancy, large, medium and small apples will be subsidized from this grant at the rate of \$0.16126772 a box, just over 16 cents a box. It is taken to the tens of thousandths of a point. All Cee grade: extra small, extra extra small in both fancy and extra fancy, cookers and hailed fruit, \$0.13126772 a box. That shows just how careful they are in their accounting. I should like the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) to notice just how efficient they are in the accounting end of their business.

Mr. Low: To the tenth decimal point.

Mr. Herridge: Yes—and in the distribution of public funds. They go on to say—and I am just going to quote two short paragraphs:

While the money will not be available from the government until next March an arrangement is being worked out to borrow the money on a reasonable basis and it is intended to place it in the hands of the shippers in time for distribution by December 10.

No one will pretend that the apple industry is in a happy state today. It would be remarkable if it were, with our offshore markets lost outright or heavily reduced by currency restrictions and subsidized competition, and our continental markets curtailed by excessive and unfair freight rates.

These conditions have led to a great deal of talk about floor prices and the Agricultural Prices Support Act. Such assistance can come only from the federal government, and there are two essential conditions which must be met before there is any hope of it. The first condition is that it must be a strong case, presented by a strong organization speaking for all the growers. We have this organization in the British Columbia fruit growers association, with its growers united by a common contract. The second condition is that, in the event of aid being granted, the grower organization must have the means of distributing it.

Both of these conditions are fulfilled. Contracts have recently been signed, and they have a very strong united organization. They have the ability to co-operate with the federal Department of Agriculture in the distribution of any funds available. I am just going to support briefly what previous speakers have said, that agricultural prices have been dropping and costs have been rising. I am not going to quote at length, but I hold in my hand a pamphlet published by the Ontario fruit and vegetable growers association entitled "The truth about fruit and vegetable prices," which gives several illustrations of the lowering of prices of farm commodities and the increasing of costs. I do want to deal briefly with a clipping from the *Nelson Daily News*. The vegetable growers of the interior of British Columbia recently met

in Nelson and discussed their general business and dealt with their problems for the future. There again they are very concerned about the uncertain future. This is taken from the *Nelson Daily News* of November 8:

U.S. competition "unfair," vegetable growers charge.

Then there is a heading: "Planned production should be introduced." We in this group very heartily agree with that. We know that if the government is going to establish floor prices, forward prices, they cannot subsidize inefficient and uneconomical production. I read this extract from the *Nelson Daily News*:

Growers agreed with Mr. Wilson (chairman of the interior vegetable marketing board) that vegetable growers received a square deal in wartime when there was a floor price for the producer and a ceiling price for the consumer.

Then one grower, whom I happen to know personally, and who grows 40 acres of vegetables on very fine land, a former immigrant from Holland, a very scientific vegetable producer, has this to say:

Mr. DeJong said that an over-all program should be instituted by the government under which a farmer would be told what produce he could grow, with consideration, of course, to whether his land was suitable, availability of markets, and so on. This system is in effect in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Holland, he said.

He goes on to deal with the uncertainty of the future. Mr. DeJong is the most efficient vegetable grower in the interior of British Columbia. Then he goes on to say this:

Everyone else has security, but not the farmer.

I think there is a great deal of merit in that statement. The article goes on:

Mr. DeJong said that this year he had put only 55 per cent of his land in crop, and had dispensed with buying any chemicals. "The risk is too great," he said.

Society, the growers agreed, is overlooking the fact that its mainstay is the production of food.

Attractive wages of industry are drawing more and more people into the cities, and young people are not entering farming.

The point of this case is that this very large grower, within ten miles of an industrial city, with a market at his door, cannot afford to pay wages in competition with surrounding industry. He has to curtail production, and curtail the quality of his farming, in order to get by at all.

The British Columbia federation of agriculture has repeatedly urged the necessity for some system of over-all forward prices. In fact, I think the British Columbia fruit growers organization was the first agricultural organization in Canada to suggest the necessity for an act similar to the Agricultural Prices Support Act. I do know that the British Columbia fruit growers association was the mother of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. So you see we are