

War Appropriation—Agriculture

Mr. WRIGHT: This is an election year, when it is likely to make more kudos for the Liberal party. That is why we get parity prices from the government. Before the dinner recess the minister spoke about the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and complimented them upon the cooperation he was receiving from them. Well, they were prepared to give that same cooperation in the first year of the war, but they did not get any cooperation from the government. There was a fight to get prices of agricultural products raised to the point at which they are to-day. What did they have to do to raise the price of butter? What did they have to do to raise the price of grain?

As the minister said, there has been a gradual increase. A concerted attempt had to be made by organized farmers to get justice from the government. But it is only at the present time that they are getting anywhere near justice—and even at that it is not full justice. I remember well in 1927 buying a tractor in western Canada, and paying \$1,485 for it. Last year I bought the same make of tractor, and it cost more than \$2,000. At the time for which the minister quotes his parity price we were paying in western Canada wages of \$50 or \$60 a month, but to-day we are paying fifty per cent more than that. So that there is still a long distance between parity price to-day for farm products, and the price the farmer should receive.

The minister mentioned that farmers in western Canada had been wanting for years to get an even price for hogs over the full year, and he quoted prices to show that that condition obtained to-day. I will tell him this, that the farmers of western Canada have not been fighting to get an even price for hogs over the whole year. Anyone who produces hogs knows that it costs fifteen per cent to twenty per cent more to produce hogs during the winter than in the summer. What the western farmers objected to was the fluctuation in the market in the fall of the year, when they marketed their greatest number of hogs. As a matter of fact, in its first bacon policy after the war started this government intended to establish a differential between prices of hogs raised in the summer and those raised in the winter, but found that, because of the increased production of hogs resulting from a greater number of people going into that business on a commercial scale who found that they could raise hogs for practically the same price the year round, it was not necessary to level out the supply in that way. When the war is over, however, and we get back to normal times we shall find it necessary to make a differential between prices of hogs

[Mr. Gardiner.]

raised during the summer and those raised in the winter if we are to have an even supply and keep our packing plants operating throughout the year.

The minister has taken a great deal of credit for the increased production of hogs and cattle. Let me say that the increased production this year is owing largely to the fact that in 1942 we had the largest grain crop ever produced in the history of Canada, and there was no market for it. The only way in which it could be marketed was in the form of hogs and cattle, and those are the hogs and cattle that are coming on to the market to-day. That is why we have such large amounts of meat products coming on to the market. The crop was not as large last year, and by this time next year the minister will find that the production of meat products will have dropped. That will be quite natural, because there just is not the feed in Canada with which to produce a greater number of cattle and hogs.

That was not what I rose to say; I wanted to ask a question with respect to this item, which has to do with assistance in the disposal of agricultural products rendered surplus by the war. I suppose this item of \$550,000 is largely to take care of the apple surplus, and I should like the minister to break down the item and tell us in connection with what products this assistance will be given.

Mr. SENN: While the minister is getting ready to reply, I notice that last year \$1,080,000 was voted under this same item. When the minister is answering the hon. member for Melfort will he give us some idea of how the money voted last year was expended, and with what results?

Mr. GARDINER: The suggestion of the hon. member for Melfort is correct; the greater part of this item has to do with the apple crop in Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Ontario. The larger portion of the expenditure is for Nova Scotia, and there is a considerable amount in connection with the British Columbia crop as well. Not much has been spent in regard to the Ontario crop. Perhaps I should say that the market has been so adjusted that the Ontario crop has an advantage on the Canadian market over the others which are being assisted by the treasury of Canada. For the year 1943-44 the amount provided for the Nova Scotia apple agreement was \$3,158,000, and this year the amount provided is \$550,000. This is not the amount which will be involved in the 1944 agreement, however; this sum is to pay the balance owing on the 1943-44 agreement. The agreement for 1944-45 is not ready yet, so that it is not possible for me to state what amount will be