

Supply—Agriculture

tomatoes competing against tomatoes grown in British Columbia, but I am sure he would prefer that to competition from California.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, has the government given consideration to enlarging the functions and powers of this board? The minister indicated it has not done very much in the last year or two. He referred to some of the things it did including work on imports of butter. I presume he referred to Mr. Howe trading a boat load of butter for a boat load of machinery in which he was interested. In any event the board has not proved entirely satisfactory. I think consideration should be given to enlarging the scope of the board so it could take care of surpluses that are developing and put them into disposable form.

Last year I received representations from various fruit and vegetable growers in the Welland area. I assume other hon. members received them. Why otherwise would they send them to me in northern Ontario? The representations stated that many canning companies in the area were purchased by United States agencies with no intention of operating them. The canning facilities were tied up and the fruit could not be harvested, much of it rotting on the trees. It was necessary to take cherries to the cannery early in the morning in order to dispose of them because some canneries operated only on a partial basis.

Without much expenditure we could establish under this board facilities for canning surplus products thus eliminating waste. I urge the minister to consider this suggestion. This could be worked on a deficiency basis. The produce could be bought at a nominal price and when sold at a later date the complete payment could be made to the producer. I think it would be advantageous both to the consumer and to the people who find it impossible to can these products that are going to waste.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, there is no need in the world for any expansion of the activities of this particular board. Actually the hon. member was talking chiefly about operations of the stabilization board. The stabilization board is the board which is responsible for supporting the prices of farm commodities and doing that by the method of purchase, the method of a deficiency payment or whatever method may be decided upon as the best one for the particular product. That has absolutely nothing to do with this particular board we are talking about which was really set up as a stand-by organization so that it could act as the merchandising agent for government stocks or as the purchaser if the government wanted to buy

stocks, which under the act could not be done by the old agricultural prices support board or by the present agricultural stabilization board.

Item agreed to.

10. Agricultural Stabilization Act administration, \$315,130.

(Translation):

Mr. Boulanger: Mr. Chairman, on item No. 10, dealing with agricultural prices stabilization, I would like to say a few words about the support price on hogs.

Since the department changed its policy with regard to the support price for hogs, we had a few surprises. The first was that during the first quarter of 1960, we expected to receive about 170,000 hogs a week, while we received an average of only 156,000.

Because of those reduced arrivals, prices have been steady, especially on the eastern market.

In western Canada, where they have the largest hog surplus, prices dropped substantially.

I have here a publication issued by the Canadian packers board for March and April 1960, showing the average premiums obtained on the Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary markets.

We note, for instance, that in mid-March, the price for pork went down to \$16.66 per hundredweight in Calgary, to \$17.25 in Winnipeg and to \$19 in Toronto. They went up later on, increasing by about 19 cents in western Canada, but scarcely by 2 or 3 cents in Toronto and Montreal.

What is strange is that prices kept falling in spite of decreased arrivals. There are reasons for that. First, we are told that hog shipments to the United States have decreased by 30 per cent.

A second reason is the equalization payments that the federal government requires from exporters in order to ensure that cuts from carcasses subject to deficiency payments will not be exported at less than floor prices.

At mid-March prices stood at 7 cents a pound for plain cuts. This is the result of an unlightened policy that was established by the government on the basis of ill-timed considerations.

In view of the situation facing hog breeders at present, I should like to direct a few questions to the minister.

First, I would like to ask him if he can tell us about the production outlook for the next half-yearly periods and about the expected prices?