

Agricultural Prices Support Act

long as the hog industry is so definitely in the hands of the packers, then the farmer will be at a great disadvantage.

Those are the things I wanted to bring to the minister's attention. Later, I may have an opportunity of bringing some other matters to his attention, but I thought I would have a better chance of pointing out these things to him now.

Mr. O. L. Jones (Yale): I should like to take a little time to place on the record the condition that now exists in the fruit-growing area of British Columbia. I fully realize that the minister is conscious of that condition, and possibly knows more about it than I do. I should like to place it on the record, however, because I have received a copy of a resolution recently submitted to a convention of fruit growers at Penticton.

As you know, the fruit-growing area of British Columbia is concentrated in the interior, mainly in the Okanagan valley. The other day mention was made of the fact that unemployment in Canada is spasmodic and is in pockets, and one might say that depressed farming communities are also in pockets. I feel that applies to the fruit growing industry; it is a depressed pocket at the moment. Suggestions have been made that we grow less, or that the trees be torn up. I should like to point out that an apple tree takes 15 years to fully mature, or to give its best crop. A fruit farmer cannot change his crops as easily as a wheat farmer, or a chicken farmer. In a fruit growing area there has to be long range planning. For that reason, while there is a surplus at the present time, in five or ten years there may be a shortage of fruit in Canada. We in the valley must look at the long range picture.

Curtailment of planting has been suggested, but this would work a real hardship on the veterans who have recently taken up acreage for fruit growing. Any curtailment of new acreage would definitely strike at the veterans. I am confident that would be the greatest mistake the government could make, to place a barrier against veterans entering the fruit industry. I know that the surplus situation today is serious. It is a question of economics. I am sure a solution can be found.

The other day I was interested in reading a speech by the Hon. Henry Bowman, minister of agriculture in British Columbia, which possibly may bring home the seriousness of the situation to each one of us. It reads as follows:

We heard a very interesting talk from Norris E. Dodd, director general of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. Mr. Dodd had recently returned from a visit to many of the

[Mr. Bryce.]

European countries on both sides of the iron curtain. He stated that the world population had increased by 200 million during the last 12 years.

This is the point I should like to draw to your attention.

Two-thirds of the population were undernourished. In some of the countries he visited, the people were dying in the streets from starvation. In most countries it was considered that some 2,500 to 3,000 calories were required to sustain life. Many of the peoples in the countries visited were getting less than 1,500 calories.

Obviously, then, Mr. Speaker, our problem is one of distribution. I feel it would be a good policy for the government to supply some of these missing calories by sending Canadian wheat, fruit and other foodstuffs, which we have in abundance, to these people. I know it is difficult to do it, especially in view of the dollar shortage in those countries. We in the interior of British Columbia, in my opinion, set an example not only to the government but to our neighbours to the south, when we made a gift of over a million boxes of apples to the British people. Time and again it has been suggested that barter deals be arranged. Small amounts of fruit and vegetables have been bartered efficiently and profitably during the past year or two. I should like to see those barter arrangements extended a little further with the European countries that cannot purchase our fruit in any other way. By doing this, we would be building up good will, and at the same time retaining those markets until the world returns to a state of normalcy. I think we can be proud of the Canadian gift of fruit already made to the world. We can hold our heads high as a nation that has done its Christian duty towards our fellow men.

On the other hand, this afternoon the minister said he would not want surplus foodstuffs dumped in the ocean or in the lake. When he mentioned "the lake" it recalled to my mind our own lake which has, in previous years, received some of these dumped foodstuffs, particularly soft fruits and apples. Our problem is a big one. I should like to place on the record the extent to which the industry has grown in the last few years. Last year, our apple production exceeded 8 million boxes; our crop of cherries was the largest we ever produced, and 520,109 cases were marketed in fresh form; of apricots, we had 603,339 lugs; of peaches, we had over 2 million cases; plums, far in excess of 1948; prunes, 1,023,000 lugs; plus 640 tons of SO₂ cherries which went to the processor. I am not mentioning the grapes, pears and so on, but that is the problem. Last year we had an abundance, and on top of that Ontario, Quebec and the maritimes