

Supply—Agriculture

Therefore if you pay 26 cents for the hog it costs you 52 cents for the pork you put in the can. At the beginning it cost approximately 12 cents a pound to put it into tins and that made it 64 cents, or 63·8 cents.

Mr. Charlton: I do not think there are very many butchers who will believe—

Mr. Gardiner: Believe it or not, it is true.

Mr. Charlton: —that half a dressed hog is bone and fat unless they are heavy hogs. Select hogs will not dress out that way. I can say that advisedly.

Mr. Gardiner: That is the fact, anyway.

Mr. Charlton: Not on grade A or B-1 hogs.

Mr. Gardiner: My friend seems to be an expert on everything. When did he start butchering? As a matter of fact that is what the packing plants tell us. Those are the facts and that is all I can give him. I am not going to change their figures even to satisfy him.

Mr. Darroch: I want to say I am very pleased that this item provides for the continuation of operations under the Agricultural Prices Support Act. So far as agriculture is concerned, I think it has probably been the most beneficial legislation that has ever been passed by the parliament of Canada. The application of the act on different occasions and to different branches of agriculture has done two things. First, it has cushioned the loss. We know perfectly well that at no time were support prices established under which there would be a profit to the producer, but I think probably the majority of producers realized why it was so done. As I say, it did cushion the loss. In other words the producer of the commodity was assured that he was not going to lose his shirt.

In my riding we produce mostly cream, hogs and beef. The farmers are not particularly producers of specialized crops. I think we have what are the best farmers in the country, the fellows who go along and produce a little of everything. They have received a great deal of benefit from the application of the act. For instance, let me start with cream, or butter, which is almost the same thing because cream becomes butter. Last year when the cream producers asked for a support price of 63 cents a pound for butter under this act the minister in his wisdom suggested that perhaps it would be better if they would take 58 cents a pound for two years. The wisdom of this counsel has been quite evident, and I am quite sure that had the price not been established last year the price of cream would be down at least ten cents. It has done something else as far as the butter industry is

concerned. It has meant that there was a market for some of the surplus milk that we had on hand as a result of the embargo caused by foot-and-mouth disease. As I say, this branch of the industry has been benefited.

Then we go on to the hog branch of the industry. I was rather interested a moment ago to hear the exchange between the minister and the hon. member for Brant-Wentworth. I think the hon. member is forgetting that when you can pork you do not can the bones, just the meat. A dressed hog contains the head and bones and the rest of the carcass but only the meat goes into the cans, not the bones. I think that would explain the suggestion of the right hon. minister that 50 per cent of the weight of the carcass goes into canned meat with the result that not 26 cents but 52 cents is the cost of the meat for canning.

This support price for hogs came at a time when we had an unusually large hog population in the country. Whether that was again caused by the difficulties incurred through foot-and-mouth disease I do not know; but I am quite sure that the 26-cent price offered or established by the department prior to the embargo was not set up to show a profit to the feeder, but it meant that he would be at least getting his costs back. With the advent or whatever you like to call it of the foot-and-mouth disease this 26-cent price was very welcome to the hog producer, I am sure. It maintained the confidence of the trade. I noticed in my own community that young pigs which were then going begging for \$4 or \$5 are now selling for \$10 and \$11, thereby establishing the fact that farmers feel they can go ahead and stay in the hog business with reasonable assurance that they will have a market.

Then we come to the beef situation. I know that cattle feeders lost money this winter. The fact of the matter is that the prices at which they bought their feeder cattle last fall were perhaps a little over-optimistic. Even at that time I could not see anything in the foreseeable future to indicate that they were going to make money on cattle that they had put in the stable at 33 to 35 cents a pound. Before the difficulties with foot-and-mouth disease the cattle market was beginning to decline; and I guess something happened last January which perhaps has not happened within the lifetime of most of us here. For a week or two, probably not over a week, prices for cattle in Canada were higher than in the United States and, as a result, for the first time in a long while cattle were shipped from the Chicago market to Canada. In fact I