

*Agricultural Prices Support Act*

say "surpluses" I am speaking advisedly and using the word "surplus" in the broadest sense of the term: you produce more than you want to consume in your own country. I am not talking about what is left over at the end of the year. I could go through these figures in front of me to indicate to you that when we get to the end of the year we have not very much of anything left over, if anything.

**An hon. Member:** Except butter.

**Mr. Gardiner:** We have not much of that. We eat a million pounds of butter a day. You could eat in ten days in this country all the surplus we have carried over. If it snows until the end of April as it has today you will eat it all. We have not got any more than enough in this country if we go through an April such as we have often had.

**Mr. Drew:** It will be bad if we have snow in June.

**Mr. Gardiner:** I have seen snow in May and I have gone skating on the 7th of May.

**Mr. Knowles:** You go skating every month in the year.

**Mr. Gardiner:** My friend says I go skating. I used to do a lot of skating, but I don't any more.

**Mr. Knowles:** You skate on pretty thin ice, too.

**Mr. Gardiner:** I used to keep some people who are in the house fairly busy too.

**An hon. Member:** Not on thin ice.

**Mr. Gardiner:** No; we put the ice some place where it would not break through, but nevertheless we had it. In concluding my remarks on this matter, I want to say that we explore every market in the world for farm products. From time to time we are selling products in Israel, India, Greece, Italy and France. We sell them in every country where we can, and it is not always just because we are worried about surpluses. It is because we want to encourage people to do what some of my friends over here have in mind when they talk about barter. We like to make some of these people feel good by giving them what they want even if we have to run ourselves short sometimes.

**Mr. Wright:** I should like to say a word or two and ask the minister a question. The hon. member for Brant-Wentworth suggested this afternoon that members of this group had given most of the credit for the additional production in England to what has taken place in the last three or four years under the Labour government. It certainly was not our intention to give that impression to the house, and I do not think we did. I was in England

in 1944, and I know their agricultural act which they had in force at that time encouraged people to break up land. I was down in Hampshire county, and one farmer I visited had put 400 acres of new land under cultivation, but he had a subsidy from the government of £7 an acre for doing so. That was one of the reasons why a lot of land was put under cultivation at that time, because of subsidies paid by the government.

I should like to ask the minister if he will answer the question which I asked during the course of my remarks with respect to the Agricultural Prices Support Act. Subsection 2 of section 9 of that act states that the board:

... shall endeavour to secure a fair relationship between the returns from agriculture, and those from other occupations.

If the press was correct the minister, in speaking to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture at Niagara Falls, indicated that the floor which had been set under the floor price legislation in Canada was in no case less than 10 per cent more than the ceiling price that had been received for those particular agricultural products during and since the war. Can the minister tell us just how the board arrives at what is a fair relationship between returns from agriculture and those from other occupations? They must have some method of determining it. So far as agriculture is concerned, I know that the price of our implements has not gone down by 10 per cent, nor has the cost of wages gone down by 10 per cent. I do not think that section of the act has been taken into consideration in setting these prices. I wish the minister would give the house and the country some idea of what method the board uses in determining what is a fair relationship between the returns from agriculture and those from other occupations in Canada.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Mr. Chairman, the board has followed exactly the practice as outlined in what I read this afternoon, and exactly the practice stated in the legislation itself. If my hon. friend did follow what I said at the federation meeting at Niagara Falls, he will recall that I was asked that question there. On the night of the broadcast, when Mr. Galbraith was there from the United States, I was asked by Mr. Hope, who is well known to members of this house, how we arrived at our floor prices. I stated that the practice we had followed had been to set up an agricultural prices support board in 1944. We gave them the task of comparing the costs to the farmers at that time with the returns they were obtaining, that is for 1943, 1944, and 1945, the last three years of the war.