

Agricultural Products Board

price of 38 cents a dozen for grade A large eggs at Montreal, that 38-cent price at Saskatoon can go down a good deal further. After other expenses are deducted the price to the Saskatchewan producer can probably go down to as little as 20 cents a dozen, with the present floor price.

Once again I say that, as far as I am concerned, I am glad the government is staying in the price support field. My only wish was that the prices had been adjusted to take care of the increased cost of production since 1943-45. In those years, 1943-45, because of the British contracts the price for hogs averaged out to \$22.25 for Wiltshire sides. Since that time, on the minister's own statement, the cost of production has gone up by 60 per cent. If the farmer is to have the same comparable floor today the price should be \$35 or \$36 a hundred for Wiltshire sides, with a further increase in the premium. Under the present floor or support price there is no incentive for the farmer to go into the production of hogs, if in the future—as happened this year—the price is going to drop 25 or 30 per cent when the farmer is sending his hogs to market.

Mr. Charlton: I should like to add something further to what the hon. member for Assiniboia has just said with regard to floor prices. Now that we are on subsection 5 of section 4 I guess we can say something about floor prices. The floor price of eggs is absolutely no guarantee at all to the producer of eggs. The only thing it guarantees is that the buyer of those eggs from the producer will get 38 cents plus his storage costs. The plant that buys the eggs from the producer can pay the producer whatever it pleases. It can pay him 20 cents. Still there is no guarantee by this government to the producer of eggs; not a particle.

The minister made a statement with regard to the average prices of products. The average over a year does not mean a thing. As the hon. member for Assiniboia has just said with regard to hogs, when they are high in price, none are coming on the market or if there are, they are few in number. Then when there is a flood of hogs coming in, the price is low. The average is not figured on the basis of how many hogs are coming in. Average prices do not actually mean a thing to the producer. Hogs and eggs are what you might call perishable products. I do not mean to say that the hog is going to spoil if you keep him an extra week. What I mean is that if the producer keeps a hog past the weight when it should be marketed, he is docked probably \$5 for doing so. The hog has to be marketed at the time it is of the correct weight, just

as the egg has to be marketed when it is fresh. It cannot be kept by the producer for a couple of weeks until the price goes up. Just this fall, at sales or in similar places, I heard a great many producers and farmers make the statement that they were through producing eggs and hogs for that very reason, namely that they had nothing to say about the prices they received, and the product had to be marketed at a particular time.

As to beef cattle or dairy cows, you do not have to sell them today or tomorrow; you can keep them for a month if you want to, or for a year. But as I have said, the situation still is that, as to hogs and eggs particularly, those products have to be marketed at the time they are ready to go to market, and they cannot be held. Therefore, as I have said, the average price does not mean a thing.

The farmers in this country want floor prices. The government is maintaining floor prices on some products, even though we feel they are too low to keep production up to a point which we think is safe even for Canada. Along with that floor price we will accept the ceiling. As producers we think it is a good idea not to have prices go too high because if the price of a product goes too high, the consumer will be forced into another market, an event which is actually to the detriment of the producers of that particular commodity. If the farmers or producers of the country are to be put in that position, then why should not other classes of the community be placed in the same position? In effect this government is guaranteeing, by tariffs, a floor price to industry. Nobody can argue that point. There is a guaranteed floor price to industry across the country. But does the government hold the ceiling? No, there is no ceiling on those products. Yet there is a ceiling, or a practical ceiling, on farm products. When the government puts both classes in the same category I think the farmer will be happy.

Mr. Quelch: Mr. Chairman, I want to say a few words with regard to paragraph (e) of section 4. We have heard a great deal lately from officials of FAO to the effect that the production of food in the world is barely keeping up with the increase in population; and they are calling for the highest possible production of food by the various nations. Is the government anxious that the farmers of this country increase their production of food to the highest level, that is, along special lines? If the farmers do that, have they any assurance that, if any surpluses occur the government will find a market for them? If that surplus is of a commodity that is