

Supply—Agriculture

that period I have taken the trouble to re-examine the history of the farm organizations and the industry in which I find myself, and to chart the progress that has been made from time to time as a result of the dedicated efforts of those organizations. Being as closely associated with some of that history as I have been, any assessment of farm legislation on my part is naturally critical. Yet, taking all things into consideration, I find that I am almost unwillingly enthusiastic about the measure of achievement that has been chalked up by the members of this government at this session of parliament that today records a breadth and sum of achievement never before achieved by any party anytime hitherto in the history of our country.

Mr. Argue: I enjoyed the remarks of the Prime Minister immensely, Mr. Chairman. I do not think he has been in better form except perhaps on that famous day of January 20, I think it was. I know that in relation to the seriousness of the debate and the degree of concern one sees, the Prime Minister puts every effort into his speech. He is a tremendous orator. There is no doubt about that. He has the largest bag of tricks of any hon. member in this house. We appreciate that fact from knowing the hon. gentleman for many years. I do not know whether, when he was in the opposition, his criticism was carping but it was consistent. He was the most critical that I think has ever sat in the opposition, even more critical perhaps than the present Minister of Public Works.

Mr. Green: Oh, no. Leave me out of this.

Mr. Pickersgill: It was a neck and neck race.

Mr. Argue: How the Prime Minister used to needle the government. He would get the Right Hon. C. D. Howe so angry that he would make statements that were so unparliamentary that I would not want to repeat them. The Prime Minister is a very able politician. He knows when things are going well in the house and the minister conducting the legislation is doing an excellent job, that the legislation is airtight and that he then does not have to pay this meticulous attention to the debate of the house. But I do not recall a Prime Minister who began a debate originally by a very long statement—an almost unprecedented statement by way of length—on motions regarding an item that was to be passed in the estimates by one of his colleagues and, after having made a very long statement and after having outlined in addition to the temporary policy, the long range vision of what might be done in many

[Mr. Nasserden.]

years ahead, comes into the house and makes a very strong statement on the item itself.

I think I have known the Minister of Agriculture as long as I have known the Prime Minister. He being an Alberta man or a prairie man and conversant with the grain problem, I thought that probably he would be taking a much more prominent position in this debate than that which he has taken so far. As I say, when the case is very weak, the Prime Minister makes up for it by pulling out all the tricks. He ridiculed the C.C.F.; and when I am the only member from the prairies on the opposition side that is not hard to do. The Prime Minister has 47 of the 48 members. I do not really think that is because the C.C.F. did such a bad job in the opposition. I think it is because our hon. friends in the official opposition, when they were in the government, did such a terrible job and the people on the prairies were so anxious to get rid of them they said, this is the party that probably has the best chance. The farmers today are caught in the price-cost squeeze. The C.C.F. candidates were caught in a political squeeze. But I do not think that pointing out that the Conservatives have 47 members from the prairies, the C.C.F. have one member and the Liberal have no members is really a good sound argument in favour of anything.

I do not think that by following this course the Prime Minister is really doing himself justice. Oh, I can remember when he was the lone wolf from Saskatchewan, the one Conservative member. That was also mentioned in this house, and he was not allowed to forget that it was the policies of R. B. Bennett which had made it impossible to elect a Conservative in Saskatchewan either provincially or federally with the exception of my hon. friend. But he built for himself a good reputation in this house as the only Conservative from Saskatchewan, the reputation of being in the opinion of many Saskatchewan people a very forceful and authentic voice of the true wishes of the people of that province.

I have no hesitation in saying today that I believe in advocating and in championing the deficiency payments for which the farm organizations have asked and not only the farm organizations but the boards of trade, the retail merchants associations, the municipal associations, the teachers associations and some of the church conferences which have passed on this question and that I am no less speaking for them at this time than was the Prime Minister when he spoke on other matters in other days.

I say this because I believe the people of Saskatchewan without reference to party