

*The Address—Mr. Argue*

pays a higher price, and that I doubt, is an additional payment of not more than six cents a bushel.

Before the election the farmer might go into his post office one week and find a cheque for perhaps \$800 for 1945 wheat. The next week he got a cheque for perhaps \$1,000 for 1946 wheat. Within the next two weeks he received a cheque for perhaps \$1,200 for 1947 wheat, and the day before the election he perhaps got a cheque for \$1,000 for 1948 wheat. In other words he was paid, 3, 4 or 5 thousand dollars just previous to the election and from the statements made by the minister from time to time they expected to get another 20 cents a bushel.

**Mr. Sinnott:** What about The Battlefords election?

**Mr. Argue:** I am coming to that. Let me quote what the Minister of Agriculture said at page 1720 of *Hansard* for February 27, 1948:

Under the plan of five-year payments that was brought into effect in 1945 the farmer knows that if there is drought he will have more money coming to him at an increase of 20 cents in each year, no matter when that drought comes—

The minister was replying to a suggestion by the hon. member for Souris that the payments should be increased by 40 cents. He said, "No, that is no good. We have had a dry year; we may have a dry year next year; we may have dry years throughout the balance of the five-year period." He believed it was a better thing to give the farmers 20 cents a bushel each spring from now until the end of the five-year pool. The farmers now know to their sorrow that the wheat board has been used as an instrument to elect the Liberal party. The farmers know that the Minister of Agriculture was right when he said in February, 1948, that the farmers did not want the government to go in debt to the bank, and bankrupt the wheat board in order to pay an additional payment.

If one goes over the wheat board consolidated balance sheet for 1949, one finds that the farmers have made a real contribution to the consumer by providing wheat at a low price. The farmers made a contribution towards keeping United Kingdom wheat prices down. The figures show that the average price for class II wheat, at the time the British agreement began to operate, was \$2.39 per bushel. Under the United Kingdom agreement, the price was \$1.70, that is the average for the first three years. Over the same period the domestic price amounted to \$1.61 per bushel. I do not say the assumption is a good one, but if we assume that the farmers had received the price of class II wheat for all wheat going into the domestic

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market, the wheat board would have on hand now another \$159 million. If under the British contract the price had equalled the price of class II wheat for the first three years, the wheat board would now have an additional \$332 million. The farmers know they have made a very large contribution indeed.

I say to the government that if it is going to maintain a stabilized wheat program, as I think it must, if it is going to give the farmers of Canada even elementary justice, then when the government brings down amendments to the wheat board act it should establish another five-year pool, in which the initial price is not less than the money derived by the farmers from the five-year pool just ended. Agriculture was willing to accept the government's stabilization program on the understanding that stability would not mean just keeping farm prices down, but in future years would also mean keeping farm prices up. If the government will bring in, as I hope it will, another five-year agreement, under which the initial price is not less than the price obtained for the last five-year pool, then I believe the farmers will say the government's wheat policy has after all been a good one.

I have one more quotation I should like to place on the record, Mr. Speaker, and then I shall be finished. The quotation has to do with the interjection made by the hon. member for Springfield (Mr. Sinnott). Yesterday the Minister of Agriculture, as recorded at page 572 of *Hansard*, made a reference to the by-election in The Battlefords constituency. Before I quote exactly what the minister said, may I refer to the fact that he alleged the C.C.F. brought in federal issues, and that the whole campaign was fought on federal issues. He said the Liberals had a great majority, and a great victory, and therefore the government's policies were endorsed. He wound up by making this statement, talking again about Liberal votes, Conservative votes and C.C.F. votes:

When they—

Meaning the C.C.F. and Conservatives.

—put the two together and added them all up we still had them trimmed by 132.

That quotation, as with so many others, is not in accordance with the facts. The Liberal party won, but not with an over-all majority of 132; they lacked 243 votes of having an over-all majority.

I should like to quote the results in that particular constituency in the last three elections. In the provincial election of 1948 the Liberal majority was 436. In The Battlefords constituency in the federal election of 1949