

of their products must be increased or their production must drop. I am asking that the government's policy in this respect be made clear, and I do so chiefly because there is a great deal of confusion and considerable misunderstanding with respect to it.

The other point I wish to raise at this time is one which affects all hon. members. It has to do with the vacancy in the constituency of Halifax. This vacancy has continued now much longer than vacancies in other constituencies which have occurred in the last few months. For instance, the constituency of Pontiac remained vacant only 137 days from the time of the death of the late member, Mr. McDonald, to the time of the election. The constituency of Parkdale was vacant 203 days from the time of the resignation of Doctor Bruce to the election on October 21, 1946. The vacancy in Portage la Prairie existed for 172 days from the death of Mr. Harry Leader to the election on that same date. In Richelieu-Vercheres the vacancy existed only 63 days from the time of the death of Hon. Mr. Cardin to the time of the election on December 23 of last year.

The Cartier vacancy existed for only 60 days from the time of the unseating of Fred Rose to the election on March 31 of this year.

If an election were called tomorrow in Halifax the lapse of time between the vacancy occurring and the election would be 206 days, longer than the vacancy in any of these other seats. In this connection I am going to quote the opinion given—I was going to say of another authority, but I will say, of an authority. It was given when the present Prime Minister sat where I am now sitting. He had this to say about a similar situation that existed at that time. I am quoting from *Hansard* of January 29, 1934, page 18, where the present Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) is reported as having said:

However, if still further evidence is required to show not only the manner in which the public has lost confidence in this administration but the manner in which the government has lost confidence in itself, it will be found in the fact that at the present time, and since May last, there has been a vacancy in the representation in the constituency of South Oxford. I ask the administration this question: When the writs were issued for the constituencies of Yamaska, Restigouche-Madawaska and Mackenzie, why was not a writ issued for the constituency of South Oxford?

I ask the same question, substituting only the names of the other constituencies I have mentioned. When the writs were issued for the constituencies of Cartier, Richelieu-Ver-

cheres, Portage la Prairie, Parkdale and others, why was not a writ issued for the constituency of Halifax?

I submit, sir, that on these three matters the government should have something to say at this time, particularly with respect to the first two. One is a matter of national importance, and one a matter which needs to be cleared up in the interests of the producers. The other concerns us all, but chiefly the electors of Halifax. I submit that the government should make a statement now as to when it intends to see that that constituency is represented in this house.

COST OF LIVING—AMENDMENT, MR. COLDWELL,
TO MOTION FOR COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in substantial agreement with what the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) has just said. Like the leader of the opposition, last week I had an opportunity of seeing the flood conditions in the Chatham-Windsor-London area. I saw many thousands of acres of good land under several feet of water. I agree with him that this is a serious matter from the point of view of the economy of Canada because of the soil erosion which occurs under such conditions. The washing away of the top soil in this part of the province of Ontario, one of its most productive parts, is analogous to the wind-blown soil of western Canada during the drought period; in Saskatchewan during that drought period the government was compelled to consider what could be done to prevent erosion and to bring about better conditions. So we got the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, which, may I say, I think has done in a limited way an exceedingly good job.

I agree also with what the leader of the opposition has said with regard to the prices of barley and oats. The producers should be in a position to know definitely what the government intends to do. I must say that my impression was not that apparently conveyed by the article from the *Winnipeg Free Press* to which the leader of the opposition referred.

With regard to the Halifax by-election, we are anxious to see the various constituencies properly represented in this house.

But I did not rise particularly to speak about these matters. We have all come back fresh from the country. Some hon. members have been to their constituencies, and others have moved around in different parts of Canada. What we have found over the last several weeks should cause this house a good