

*Supply—Agriculture*

that I would postpone this part of my argument so that when I return to it I may be able to give the page as well as the authority.

**Mr. Harkness:** That is quite all right.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** But I am now challenging the statement of the minister that since he took office he has been able to arrest a rise in the cost of production. By the way, talking about the increase in the cost of production, may I point out that the government has not yet given any answer to the request of the federation of agriculture and the interprovincial farm union council for the laying down of methods and instructions by which a more accurate assessment of the cost of production can be arrived at. With all this discussion of deficiency payments, all this business of a cost squeeze and the difficulties confronting the farmer with respect to the kind of market in which he sells his goods and the situation he is faced with when he has to buy, it seems to me that in the face of the persistent demands by these farm organizations the government should provide a basis for a more accurate assessment of the factors involved in production costs than exists at the present time.

It will be no answer for the minister to ask why the government of which I was a member did not do that. That is the stock answer of the present government to every conceivable question. Perhaps it should have been done a long time ago; in fact I will qualify that and say that it should have been done, not "perhaps". But hon. gentlemen are now sitting on the ministerial benches, the farmers are asking for this kind of assessment, and in my opinion the persistent delay on the part of the administration in meeting this demand reflects the growing gap between the kind of assurances given by the administration for the purpose of winning an election and the resulting policies once the government has a secure period of tenure, happily ensconced in the seats of the mighty.

I suggest to the minister that he significantly left out of his quotations from the Current Review of Agricultural Conditions in Canada a very important paragraph. I should like to refer to the speech he made on January 23, 1959, particularly at page 255 of *Hansard*. The minister quoted from the Current Review of Agricultural Conditions in Canada, January, 1959 issue, as follows:

Prices paid by farmers in 1958 for commodities and services used in production and for living were only slightly more than one per cent above those of 1957.

Having quoted this passage he went on to say:

Therefore I feel it is quite apparent that the cost-price squeeze which was a cause of hardship to the farmer under the Liberal administration ever since 1951-52 has been finally halted and reversed.

Significantly, the minister left out of his quotation from the Current Review of Agricultural Conditions in Canada the remainder of the paragraph from which the cited phrase was taken. That paragraph continues:

Higher prices were recorded for all farm business items used in the index with the exception of building materials, feed and seed.

My hon. friend talks about my bureau of statistics. My statistics may be inadequate, but I do not leave out significant or relevant passages. The minister left out the following phrase:

The upward trend in the index is expected to continue during the coming year.

Contrast that statement with the statement of the minister in the house on March 6. I have quoted not from his speech but from one of the publications of his own department, which says that "the upward trend in the index is expected to continue during the coming year."

**Mr. Harkness:** I was talking about facts. That is a prophecy for 1959. I was talking about 1958.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** My hon. friend says he was talking about 1958, but I do not think that changes the situation at all.

**Mr. Harkness:** It changes it a great deal.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** A mere assertion is no argument. My hon. friend is only making his position untenable. I was going to say "ridiculous" but I will not.

**Mr. Harkness:** I was talking about facts.

**The Chairman:** Order. I have already mentioned that this chit-chat across the floor of the house will not be tolerated by the chair.

**Mr. Argue:** Ask the minister to leave. Let him take a coffee break.

**The Chairman:** I must ask hon. members to permit the hon. member for Essex East to carry on with his remarks. They will have ample time to make their own speeches. They cannot interrupt him in the most unparliamentary fashion they have been doing.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I thank you once again, Mr. Chairman, for coming to my assistance, but I must assure you that these interventions on the part of the Minister of Agriculture really do not destroy my imperturbability. They do indicate the very uncomfortable position in which the minister finds himself when his argument, which