

*Supply—Agriculture*

even professional men went into pork and cattle breeding with resulting well known awkward surpluses.

Then the government was seized with panic, and the Minister of Agriculture went back on his wonderful promises and forgot the fine arguments he had used when the bill was being considered.

It is true, as Mr. Paul-Henri Lavoie said in the *Terre de Chez Nous* of May 6, 1959, that:

Whenever surpluses substantially exceed marketing possibilities, a high class show is put on, led by groups whose real intentions are concealed by high-sounding names. Panic-stricken government authorities rush into legislation which often bears the earmarks of expediency.

What a face-about since the statements the Prime Minister made in 1957 and 1958.

What reversal too, in the attitude of the Minister of Agriculture who recently made the following declarations during the convention of the Catholic farmers' federation in Toronto:

(Text):

We have managed to maintain better prices for a considerable number of commodities, particularly through the operations of the stabilization board, but only so much is possible along these lines.

(Translation):

The minister claims that his government helped maintain better prices for a considerable number of farm commodities. But, of course, he is very careful not to say for which ones. Were they better prices for wheat, oats, barley, pork, eggs, etc.? Of course not. And in the same speech he said that the prices obtained were higher than those obtained by U.S. farmers.

In closing his remarks, the minister said:

(Text):

The policies of this government during the past two and a half years were designed to improve farm income position and share of the national wealth.

(Translation):

Can you imagine, Mr. Chairman, a responsible minister making a statement like that when it is known to everyone, especially to farmers, that the net farm income in 1959 was 7 per cent lower than in 1958, that is, by \$88,174,000.

In spite of the huge amounts we spend to support the prices of farm products, those prices keep coming down, while the cost of goods and services required by the farmers keep rising. In this connection, I should

like to quote a few figures which I would ask the Minister of Agriculture to consider, after he has had a chance to read my remarks, since he is not in the house this afternoon. I would ask him to consider and ponder those figures, and I dare him to challenge their accuracy.

If we compare the average price of certain farm products in the ten-year period running from 1947 to 1956 with the average price in 1957, 1958 and 1959, we find that during the last ten years of the Liberal regime, wheat was selling at \$1.49 a bushel, whereas in the last three years it has been selling at \$1.23. In the last three years, barley, that used to fetch \$1 a bushel, has been selling at 75 cents a bushel. Oats, which between 1947 and 1956, was selling at 65 cents, has been selling at 53 in the last three years. Prices of flaxseed have similarly dropped from \$3.36 to \$2.67; pork is down from \$27.16 to \$26.19 a cwt.; eggs, which used to sell at 41.6 cents a dozen, have been selling at 35 cents a dozen in the last three years.

I could go through the list of all farm products, and we would find similar price drops. I have here all the figures. For instance, rye which used to sell at \$1.50 a bushel during 1947 to 1956, sold at 58 cents a bushel in 1958; the price of potatoes dropped from \$1.99 to \$1.73.

**Mr. Pigeon:** What about butter?

**Mr. Boulanger:** Butter has been selling at 64 cents and I hope the government will keep it at that level. It is the only product on which eastern farmers depend for staying on the farms.

**Mr. Pigeon:** Why was it not increased under your administration?

**Mr. Boulanger:** Mr. Chairman, I have just given figures of farm prices and shown that there has been a steady decline as a result of Conservative party policy. Now if we look at the price index of goods and services bought by farmers we find that, there too, prices are detrimental to farmers. In 1956 for instance, the price index for goods and services bought by farmers was 247.6; it went up to 255.9 in 1957, 259.9 in 1958 and to 273.5 in August 1959. This is to say that, since 1956, the price index of goods bought by farmers has gone up by 25.9. If we take the index from January 1, 1959 to August of the same year, we notice an increase of 13.6 in eight months.