

Supply—Agriculture

as the farmers are concerned, what is lost sight of is the fact that grain can be transported to smaller elevators from the field, in almost any type of truck or trailer. Each truck or trailer can be handled just as quickly in these small local elevators as in the larger ones. Perhaps only a farmer or an elevator operator can possibly imagine the congestion at large centralized elevators during the harvest period. I assure you that even under the best of conditions, grain delivery would be practically eliminated during the harvest time, when time is of the essence. Under these circumstances, the farmer can expect not only higher delivery costs but added storage costs as well. I hope the minister will give us his assurance that before any action is taken in regard to branch line abandonment the public interest will be the first consideration.

In his opening statement to the committee, the minister was enthusiastic in his appraisal of the agriculture economy over the past year. This is understandable on the part of one whose department is deeply involved in the affairs of that industry. The rest of us would be more inclined to share that enthusiasm if there had been some action on the part of the government since they were elected that would show they understood the problems of agriculture, and that they had policies designed to meet them. Since the last election the farmers of this country have been benefiting from the groundwork laid by the former government for a long term program to assist agriculture, a long term program that was brought into being to help the farmer obtain his rightful share of the nation's economic well-being. There has been little done by way of furthering this aim by the present government over the past year, nor have any of the promises that were made to agriculture by the Prime Minister been kept. Whether or not this has been by accident or design remains to be seen, but time is running out on the election promises of this government such as the two price system for wheat and a floor of \$2 for that grain. These promises, plus regional support prices for eggs and hogs are just some of the things the farmers were led to expect from the Prime Minister's statements at that time.

We know the minister has had these promises hanging over his head, and this has been enough to discourage any minister of agriculture, particularly in view of the fact he has had little assistance from his colleagues. I would point out to the minister, however, that it was he who promised some-

[Mr. Muir (Lisgar).]

thing would be done about higher machinery prices. The committee set up by the former government was unable to complete its work on this problem but much valuable information was gathered which may be of assistance to the minister. No one suggests there is any easy solution, but the cost of equipping the average farm today can run as high as the price of the land itself. This makes it difficult for our future farmers to get an initial start. We will be waiting with interest anything in the way of a solution which the minister has to offer. We hope also he will be able to persuade his colleagues that the problems of agriculture are not static, but must be continually reviewed in the light of the changing needs of the industry. He can expect our full support in this regard.

I listened with interest to the debate that took place this afternoon concerning political patronage. I am one of those who believe that the minister is perhaps sincere in his desire to eliminate this vulgar, nasty proposition from his department. I am referring to the Minister of Agriculture, not to some of the other ministers who I have reason to believe are more politically minded. If this is the case, I can assure the minister the full support and confidence of the official opposition.

I, myself, would be quite happy to see political patronage eliminated. During the time I have represented my area I have not once played politics with anybody. When it comes to appointments of P.F.A.A. inspectors, and I have received something like 60 requests in one year, I refer them to Regina and I do not even ask the people for whom they voted. I sincerely trust that in the minister's handling of the affairs of his department, in my constituency at least, he will leave the situation that way.

Progress reported.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Batten): Earlier this morning during the deliberations of the committee, the Minister of Industry wished to table a document. Does the house now give permission to the President of the Privy Council, on behalf of the Minister of Industry, to table this document?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the house leader if the business remains unchanged as announced?

Mr. Favreau: Mr. Speaker, the business will be the same as announced, but with the follow-