

*Interim Supply*

The government promised the people of western Canada that there would be a comprehensive system of crop insurance. The government introduced a crop insurance scheme which has been largely a failure. Very few farmers in western Canada have been able to take advantage of this scheme because they felt they could not afford the high premiums that went with this kind of so-called crop insurance. It is not working. If the government had fulfilled its promise to the Canadian people and if we had a crop insurance system that was working, then we would not have to ask the federal government now for special disaster payments out of the national treasury. We would have had an adequate program of crop insurance, and this we do not now have.

As a matter of fact, any farmer who asks for crop insurance must, in becoming eligible for crop insurance, forgo the benefits of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. We need a crop insurance plan that is available not to a few small areas where there is little crop loss or little risk of crop failure, but one that can be applied universally to all farmers irrespective of the amount of risk involved.

**Mr. Harkness:** That is exactly what we have.

**Mr. Argue:** That is not what we have at all. The farmers who have the greatest risk have to pay premiums that they cannot afford to pay; that is what we have. You say to them, therefore, this is the best we can give you and we have to keep the Prairie Farm Assistance Act which we criticized for so many years.

**Mr. Harkness:** You are not talking about crop insurance at all; you are talking about some form of relief.

**Mr. Argue:** My hon. friend was so good as the minister of agriculture that the Prime Minister transferred him to another department. The farmers all said, wonderful; we are in favour of it. Now, if the government wants a defence program that has greater support in Canada, the best thing they could do would be to transfer the present Minister of National Defence. They should make him a rotating minister. This would be a sign of improved policy, any time he was dumped out of a department. He was the minister of agriculture, and he was a failure. He introduced this legislation which has been such a hoax and today when most of the farmers in western Canada face drought conditions and disaster with no crop insurance, he says the policy is good. They are being looked after. Well, Mr. Chairman, they are not being looked after. They are being condemned to a very inadequate income.

[Mr. Argue.]

This government is going to have an election one of these days. It will not be too soon for the people of this country. I am sure they will welcome the opportunity to express their opinion of a policy that has not worked, a policy that has failed. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the Prime Minister was right when he said the next election issue should be that of private enterprise versus democratic socialism. I think that is the best kind of issue on which to have the election. We accept this suggestion of the Prime Minister. The Liberals were over there for 22 years and they did such a terrible job that the people of the country decided there needed to be a change, and very rightly. Now, the Liberals have been supplanted by another free enterprise government that says, do not blame us; we cannot tell the automobile manufacturers of this country what kind of automobiles they should produce. We want to be so careful that we do not even want to advise them about anything. This government says, "We cannot do anything with private business; it is a law unto itself." All it can do is mismanage the financial and fiscal policies of the country but it cannot exercise any control over basic economic questions in this country.

We suggest this, Mr. Chairman, and the C.C.F. has stood for this for many years. The new party I believe, when it comes out of its founding convention, if it is to have a wide appeal to the people, as I am certain it will have, will be different from these old private enterprise parties. It must be different. It must present the people of this country with an alternative to the economic conditions and the economic slump and morass which this country now faces.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Argue:** Many things need to be done, Mr. Chairman. Many of the things need to be done for which we have been campaigning for many years. One is the removal of some of the rackets in the country such as the racket of the small loans companies and the small loans sharks and the interest rates in the second mortgage field that are supported by the other political parties in this house. We suggest that something should be done about the drug racket and the high cost of drugs. We suggest that to do something about this matter requires government action and government control. We suggest that if this step seems necessary, as we believe it is, the government should take an active part in manufacturing basic and essential drugs as a means of bringing down their cost. We are suggesting that the social security system in this country is very greatly lacking.

**Mr. Drysdale:** Where?