

*Supply—Agriculture*

commonwealth and empire countries. We can no longer afford to go on buying so many agricultural products from the United States and rolling up a big adverse surplus against us year after year, putting the future citizens of this country into such debt that they will not be able to extricate themselves. We surely ought to be able to see that. Such agricultural products as are imported we ought to bring from empire countries.

Now, Mr. Chairman, having said that, I shall end what I have to say at the present time and say more at a later time.

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I cannot follow the hon. member for Lethbridge in the same tone of remarks as to the right hon. Minister of Agriculture. I cannot understand why a member in this house would take 80 minutes, or nearly that much, of the time of the house, compliment the minister on being such an excellent person in his portfolio in charge of agriculture, and then use the invectives he did in trying to say that we do not have a good agricultural policy in Canada.

I must say at the very outset that I believe this government, under the leadership of the right hon. minister, has dealt one sledgehammer blow after another to the agriculture of Canada since the war. In the first instance I bring to the attention of the house what happened in 1945, right after the war. That was the first failure of this government, which had promised the farmers of this country that they would be able to buy machinery and other things they needed on their farms at pre-war prices. The right hon. minister, along with his colleagues, with the assistance, I might say, of the loyal opposition, as they are happy to be called, and the Social Crediters to my right, all went out in 1945 asking for decontrol. I am going to say that there is no single policy—

**Mr. Blackmore:** May I ask my hon. friend a question now? Who in this group advocated the removal of controls?

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** All you need to do, Mr. Chairman, or any hon. member, is look up the records and see that on many occasions—

**Mr. Blackmore:** I challenge the hon. member's statement.

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** You will find that what I have said is according to the facts.

**Mr. Blackmore:** It is not.

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** They were happy to throw controls out the window. They challenged this group on occasions, saying that we were in favour of controls and

regimentation and that sort of thing. We were quite happy to take that responsibility. What has been the situation since 1945? The farmers throughout Canada, and particularly western Canada, were trying to recuperate after many years during which they could not replace farm machinery owing to the fact that steel went into the necessities of war.

Then we see what happened. When the first decontrol measure on steel went through, fabricated steel started to go up, in the manufacture of farming machinery. What happened was that farmers' costs in the replacement of farm machinery went up by leaps and bounds, until by 1952 we find that, by and large, agricultural farm machinery was about 200 per cent higher than in 1941. The same thing happened in respect to some agricultural commodities.

It is true that our farm prices went up substantially, but they were always behind the steep increases in prices of the things the farmer had to buy and his general costs of production. The farmer has never asked for unreasonably high prices. He understands without any element of doubt that when things reach their peak, at some point in the inflation period he is going to take the brunt of that inflation, and his prices will fall much faster than his costs of production. So I say that this government—not necessarily the Minister of Agriculture, but the whole government—is responsible for that.

In addition to that, this government, with the right hon. minister as a cabinet minister agreeing with the policy, sold down the river some of the fertilizer plants of this country by which our farmers could have got one item with which they could have maintained soil fertility, at a relatively low cost. This government, as it did with many other things, sold down the river some of our people's fertilizer plants at fire-sale prices. The result has been that the farmer is now paying unduly high prices for his fertilizer ingredients, which in effect are causing a high cost of production figure for the farmer.

This group has gone on record in favour of parity prices. We feel that the Canadian economy is still primarily agricultural. In spite of the fact that we have increased our industrialization, and have developed our natural resources in respect to iron ore, oil and many other minerals, the fact still remains that one of the largest and most important segments of our economy is agriculture. It is rather unfortunate, not only for ourselves but perhaps for the whole free world, that here we have a capitalist government along with other capitalist governments guiding the resources of our country. As the hon. member for Cape Breton South said the