

Supply—Mr. W. H. A. Thomas

present opposition. The Canadian parliament is no worse in that regard than has been the mother of parliaments over the years.

I am very proud to belong to this party. I am pleased that it was possible for the former minister, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, who was for several years the house leader of this party in government and in opposition, to point out how this party has offered its co-operation at all times.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot allow the comments of the hon. member for Red Deer to go by without some refutation. I have great respect for the member for Red Deer, who is a good friend of mine, but I also have a loyalty to the party to which I belong. The hon. member for Red Deer was hardly justified in bringing to our attention at this time the so-called revolt in the cabinet during the Diefenbaker regime in February of 1963. The former member, Pierre Sevigny, in his recently published book points out that this so-called cabinet revolt was much over-emphasized and blown up out of all proportion. We know that in any cabinet and in any political party which is composed of individuals with strong minds and strong wills there will be differences of opinion. I am sure the hon. member knows this from his own experience.

● (6:20 p.m.)

The hon. member knows what happens in parties and he knows what happens to parties when there are strong ideological differences and matters of principle become involved. All parties in the house fully realize what happens. This matter of trouble in the Conservative party has been blown up out of all proportion, and I should like to say that there is in the Conservative party today and has been in the Conservative party all through the years, including February, 1963, a reasonable and abundant degree of unanimity and loyalty.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West): I say, Mr. Speaker, that anyone who tries to blow up the Conservative trouble and differences of opinion out of all proportion is not doing a service to this house or to the country.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, might I ask the hon. member for Middlesex West a question?

Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West): Yes.

Mr. Thompson: The hon. gentleman is a good friend of mine but I should just like to [Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West).]

ask him this question. Does he think I would have raised this matter today if it had not been raised in the house earlier? The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) deliberately made it part of his speech.

Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West): Well, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) felt that it was a fitting time, and I am willing to agree with him that in beginning the business of this session the Conservative party are entitled to a great deal of credit for offering their co-operation. As the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre pointed out, the present government are in difficulties. They are in difficulties very similar to those in which the former government found themselves in February, 1963. But the difference between now and 1963 is that now the house is co-operating with the government.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West): We find the Social Credit party, with all respect to them, in the face of a threat that we would have another election, voting with the government although they expressed themselves as being in favour of the opposition's amendment. In 1963 they laid down conditions under which they would support the government. The government of that day declined to accept those conditions. The Social Credit party then joined the other opposition parties in voting against the government. Today they lay down no conditions. However, because the government threatens to call an election, they support the government. It is up to the electors of the country, of course, to decide these things, but I think in fairness to the party to which I have the honour of belonging I should point out these matters.

This is not what I rose to say particularly, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to make a plea, to begin with, for the part time farmers of Canada. We have both large and small farmers in this country and our present legislation is aimed at providing assistance to what are known as economic farm units. Farming is a way of life. There are something like 480,000 farms in Canada according to the 1961 census. Half of these farms are under 70 acres in size. They cannot be classed in most cases as economic farm units.

As I have said, Mr. Speaker, farming is a way of life. In fact, it is as much a way of life as it is a business and in some cases it is much more a way of life than it is a business.