

Interim Supply

Mr. Argue: We would like to hear what the Prime Minister has to say. We challenge him to enter the debate this afternoon and tell us why the government has bogged down and has not been able to manage the affairs of this country in a more competent manner.

Mr. Rapp: You are the ones who prevented him from speaking.

Mr. Argue: If the Prime Minister would come in now I am sure that we would be delighted to hear him. He does not have to leave for a day. He has unlimited time and can speak for hours today. But the Prime Minister is sulking. He was not able to speak yesterday when he wanted to speak, and now he says that if he could not speak when we were to take up other matters, he is not going to speak at all. That is a rather childish performance, I suggest a rather juvenile performance, for the Prime Minister of this country. We are going away for a recess, but before we go we hope the Prime Minister will make some contribution to this debate.

We shall come back when the house re-assembles to deal with important questions which we hope will be placed before this house. We have had a number of supply motions. We have had a number of want of confidence motions. I suggest that there is one question in the minds of the people of this country, and that is this. In the interests of good government and in the interests of democratic government we should have a government on the treasury benches that has a majority. The sooner the people of Canada are given the opportunity to deal with the situation which now prevails in this house, the better. We would welcome an appeal to the people at the earliest possible moment, as soon as the Prime Minister can gather the people around him who will encourage him to make this kind of decision.

We have had evidence in this house this session of the incompetence of the government, of the failure of the government to bring forward legislation in a regular manner which would deal with the pressing problems facing the country. The government has not acted in a way which would inspire confidence. The Canadian people have been told by cabinet ministers one thing one day and another thing another day. The Minister of Agriculture, who probably speaks more glibly than any other minister, has gone out and said there is a danger of credit losses on wheat sales. He has said "We want you to put up some money". He has said "I am having trouble with the cabinet. I cannot get these things through the cabinet. If you would help me by putting up some of the farmers' money, it would help me do a better job".

Then he said "Oh, it is the opposition parties who are holding me up". He named two, and later said he had picked the wrong two, that it was another two.

The third reason for his difficulties, according to a report I have read, was that he said he was having trouble in the cities. The latest thing he came up with was when he said that there was a campaign against credit sales which was making it difficult, and that the campaign was coming from the island of Formosa.

I think the Minister of Agriculture has used every possible excuse or alibi for the proposals he has made, none of which has been accepted by any major farm organization as being workable. The chairman of the Canadian wheat board has turned down these proposals; he has said that he did not think they were workable in the international field. The Saskatchewan wheat pool has turned them down as not realistically workable. The stock of the Conservative party on the prairies in the last federal election was very high, but I suggest that the stock of the Conservative party on the prairies is not nearly as high today. Part of the reason that it is not nearly as high today is the confusion in the mind of the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. McIntosh: Nonsense.

Mr. Argue: I would remind my friend from Swift Current-Maple Creek that the recent changes in the percentage of popular vote in the various constituencies of Manitoba as registered in a provincial election are definite proof that what I say is absolutely correct. I make the statement that if the Liberal party could come within six percentage points of the Conservative vote when the provincial party has been led by Premier Duff Roblin, the Liberal party will have far greater strength in the next federal election in Manitoba when the Conservative party is led by its present federal leader.

We have tried to get frank statements from the government about various policies. We think the government has very important decisions which should be made. We are not impressed by the competence of this administration. One of the matters which have been brought forward time after time in the present debate is the question of the Columbia river. It has been stated that the government bungled, that the government did not protect legitimate Canadian rights. There have been recent negotiations with regard to the export of Canadian oil to the United States. Certain negotiations were held the other day. The President of the United States some weeks ago issued a proclamation which the oil industry felt placed a severe limitation