

In this morning's newspapers it was reported that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture said in Middlesex yesterday that there would be some good news for the farmers soon. Well, it had better be very soon. They are getting awfully tired and hungry and mad because of this thing. Let me remind you of what happened to the cattle industry. The government took the ceiling off barley and oats on the 23rd of October, and prices immediately jumped about 30 cents a bushel on the average. That meant that the livestock producer in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime provinces had to pay that much more for his feed, although the selling prices for his own products remained at the old levels.

I am going to say something now about my old favourite, the grain question. I was glad to read of the statement that the leader of the Progressive Conservative party made about the marketing of grain—it took him quite a while to come to the conclusion, I admit. There were certainly two views on the question: one was that grain should be marketed through compulsory wheat pools, and the other was that it should be sold on a free and open market. You may say that the second view is held by those who want trading to be done on the Grain Exchange, but I am not interested in that aspect. What does concern me is that, in a country where we boast about democracy and free enterprise, we say to our greatest industry, the grain producing industry, "You have got to sell your products through our pools".

I was pleased to hear the leader of the party to which I belong say last Monday night that he was in favour of allowing the people of Canada to sell their grain to the pools if they wished, with the government providing the machinery to help them to do so, but that they would also have the right to sell under the free enterprise system to anybody who wants to buy.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: But up to that time he had been supporting the restrictive policy.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: I have just admitted that.

Hon. Mr. CRERAR: What was my honourable friend's stand on the question previously?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: I have always been opposed to the restrictive policy, and I said so in this house last year. I ask my honourable friend from Thunder Bay (Hon. Mr. Paterson), if he read my speech, to confirm the fact that I was against the policy. I understand the attitude of the people of western Canada as well as my honourable

friend from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar). I have represented part of Manitoba in the political field longer than he has. I say that when the farmers in our part of the country are not allowed to sell their grain wherever they wish, they are being most unfairly dealt with. Mr. Bracken now supports that contention.

When the wheat agreements came up for discussion last year I opposed them as strongly as I could; and I oppose them today. I believe that no matter what happens, the principle underlying the agreements is wrong.

Hon. A. L. BEAUBIEN: The leader of your party did not oppose them in the other house.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: He did not support them either.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: He fought for them in the other house.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: He went to Portage la Prairie in the fall of 1946, when Mr. Miller was elected, and opposed the agreements. The result of the election showed that the people of Portage la Prairie did not favour the government policy.

Hon. Mr. LAMBERT: May I ask my friend if it is true that the leader of the Progressive Conservative party, Mr. Bracken, did not appear in the constituency of Portage la Prairie at the time of the by-election?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: Ask the honourable member from St. Jean Baptiste (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) whether or not the leader was there. He held eight public meetings in that constituency. I have my evidence right with me, because my friend from St. Jean Baptiste knows that the leader did appear.

Hon. A. L. BEAUBIEN: I wish to correct my friend from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert) in his belief that Mr. Bracken did not appear in the Portage la Prairie constituency. But as far as opposing the wheat agreements was concerned, I never saw such soft pedalling in my life.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: That makes no difference; he opposed the agreements. He appeared at eight different places, and the only poll that Mr. Miller did not carry was the home of the C.C.F. candidate. The place where the Liberal candidate resided was carried by Miller.

Hon. Mr. LAMBERT: I give all credit to Miller.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: My friend should be sure of his facts before he interrupts.