

Supply—Agriculture

To substantiate my remarks, one has only to see *Hansard* for 1957, when the Liberals were in office, that there was also then a shameless exploitation of the eastern and western farmers. However, no member for Bellechasse rose to ask that such exploitation be stopped. Yet, it had existed for 22 years and our riding is 68 per cent agricultural. That is why I say that if they are financed by the grain companies, the farmers will never be justly dealt with.

A month ago I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker), in order to prevent another Cuban crisis in Algeria, to ship our food surplus stored in Lauzon. As the mayor in my municipality, I have asked for supplies, for instance canned pork processed in 1954, for which rent is paid on many warehouses with watchmen, but as it is refused to our poor families, let us ship it, at least, to two million Algerians who will starve to death this winter.

We are the granary of the world. For goodness' sake, let us put a stop to petty politics and act as responsible lawmakers who have a duty to help relieve the hardship of those who suffer.

(Text):

Mr. Chaplin: In rising to speak today on the agriculture estimates I, unlike the hon. member for Davenport, make no pretence of being a farmer or an agricultural expert in any way. In fact I have no qualifications along that line, and have perhaps few qualities that would go to make a successful farmer. However, a major part of the time that has been taken up on the debate on these estimates has been devoted to an attack on the Minister of Agriculture over the contents of a speech he made early this month in Regina to members of the Saskatchewan wheat pool, I believe. It has been represented by opposition speakers that this speech was a breach of cabinet confidence, responsibility and solidarity. It has even been suggested that the minister had been revealing government policy without the approval of his cabinet colleagues.

The opposition no doubt would like to make some kind of constitutional issue of this matter, or some kind of quasi-legal issue that would allow full scope to all the opposition lawyers, semi-lawyers and would-be lawyers with which their ranks seem to abound. If this kind of smokescreen could be generated I submit that it would help to obscure the fact that the minister has been one of the most successful ministers of agriculture that

[Mr. Dumont.]

we have had in this country. The very vehemence and vigour of the attacks that have been made upon him are in direct proportion to the success he has achieved and the confidence he has established with the farmers throughout this country.

In order to illustrate this fact, Mr. Chairman, let me tell you of an incident which took place during the last election campaign, when a very prominent Liberal farmer in my constituency was talking to me. He made it very clear to me, of course, that he was not voting for me or supporting me but that he was voting for the Liberal candidate as was, of course, most natural and proper under the circumstances. However, he said this to me: "There is no denying the fact that Alvin Hamilton is the best Minister of Agriculture we have had in this country in my time". May I say, Mr. Chairman, that he was not a young man. That is why I feel that certain opposition parties are so anxious to discredit him and to destroy him politically. They know they have no chance of winning the farm support in western Canada so long as he is Minister of Agriculture.

An hon. Member: What about eastern Canada?

Mr. Chaplin: Let us examine just what it was he said that caused all this furor. First of all he suggested that the wheat pools consider the advisability of selling wheat themselves both in Canada and eventually in the export field. Second, he suggested that they discuss the possibility of setting aside a certain portion of the final wheat payments in order to build up a fund to be used in sharing any loss that might be incurred. These are suggestions that were put forward for consideration. These suggestions do not constitute government policy at this time, but are put forward for consideration by the people who are best equipped to judge their merits. No doubt if they were looked upon with favour in due time the minister would put these suggestions before the cabinet and try to persuade the members of the cabinet to adopt such suggestions as government policy.

Now, the opposition members try to make it appear as if the minister had done something unsavory, something sinister. The fact is that it is just a matter of good communications. Believe me, good communications are of the greatest importance in this country and in the world today. In a world that is clouded by half truths and contaminated with propaganda and lies, it is very refreshing to me to find effective communications between a ministry and the people it purports to serve. This certainly was never true and was not