

Business of Supply

I could quote a number of figures to show the dismal record of the Liberal government in dealing with agricultural problems. I have noted in particular that over the past few months, whenever agriculture has been debated the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) has quoted the 1963-68 average figures and compared them with the 1958-62 average figures. While this is very nice, and I suppose the minister has his own reasons for trotting out these sets of figures, we want to know what has happened since he became Minister of Agriculture. It is a rather dismal record, Mr. Speaker.

Farm cash receipts have gone down steadily since the minister assumed office. We have a dismal record with respect to farm marketings, with respect to export sales and export prices. I will not go into statistics at the present time. This afternoon we heard a speech from the Minister without Portfolio in which he criticized some aspects of the motion before us. He did not deal at all with the amendment that was moved by my colleague. His address in the debate this afternoon reminded me of a lecture in a law school such as he might have delivered at one time. It is perhaps a good idea for the minister to keep in practice, because I predict that he will be back in the classroom before too long.

It is also good to know where the Liberal backbenchers stand on this question. I listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks of the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas). I do not doubt his sincerity in wishing these problems to be solved. I have noted that he has made some very fine statements in various parts of the country, and on occasion in this House. He has from time to time asked for a number of very useful things. But it is quite obvious, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to anything important, he is not listened to by the government. More important than that is the old saying: Talk is cheap. It is how the hon. member votes that counts.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Burton: We want to see how the hon. member will vote this evening. He has indicated that he will vote for the government. It is his right and privilege to decide how to vote. It seems to me that unless the hon. member and other Liberal backbenchers representing agricultural areas in the west support our amendment, they will make it quite clear that they are not in favour of a

deficiency payment or the appointment of a transport controller. I suggest if they really mean what they say, those Liberal backbenchers will support the amendment moved by my colleague. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, it is time they put their vote where their mouth is. We have had enough talk in this situation.

In addition, we have to ask where the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the rest of the western members of the cabinet stand on this matter. We have a number of cabinet ministers from the west; they are called upon to do the government's dirty work whenever the powers that be within government circles say "No" to requests from the west for farm legislation or assistance to farmers. Either that, or they do not understand the situation; they cannot have it both ways. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that if they have any guts at all, the western representatives in cabinet will tell the Prime Minister and the cabinet, "If you want us to continue in cabinet, you will have to approve better policies than you have up to the present time." They will have to say, "We now have a bankruptcy of policy."

If they are not willing to do this, if they have any integrity they will have no choice but to resign from the cabinet. On the other hand, if they are content to sit on their little pedestals of glory until the next election, that is their choice. In that event, I suggest that the people of western Canada will deal very harshly with them at the next election.

Mr. E. B. Osler (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, although I do not come from a farm constituency, the area I represent depends to a great extent on the well-being of western farms and the western economy. I do not like to pre-suppose anything, but I dare say I feel very much as the proposer of the motion feels about the west and the western economy.

The hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) and I both have in common our geography. We are both people who earn our living in, and both of us call home, that part of the country west of the Lakehead. We are both conscious of a feeling of alienation in this country that we call home. There is a feeling of alienation in the world generally and in western Canada specifically.

Some of us have a vague feeling that the last 100 years have somehow let us down. I think this feeling has some justification, because in 1867 when Canada became a confederation as we now know it, the combined liabilities of the original colonies that