

a slap in the face to the farmers, and he has not explained what he meant.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: I say that the Government have not helped the farmers in Western Canada to date; and that statement stands. The people cannot be deluded very long by promises that it is impossible to fulfil, because there must come a day of reckoning. There is an emergent situation in Western Canada, but after the Prime Minister had gone through that part of the country he stated at Regina that everything was all right in the West; that there was no hardship.

Hon. Mr. GILLIS: He did not say that.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: Well, he did not find any cause for alarm.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD: I should like the honourable gentleman to produce the remarks that he alleges were made by the Prime Minister at Regina, to the effect that there was no hardship in the West. That is a statement that is unlikely, on the face of it.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: Well, there does not seem to be any use in continuing any further in this way. I am surprised at the attitude of honourable members from the West.

Hon. Mr. SHARPE: The honourable gentleman should say "some of the honourable members from the West." He should not include us all. I have not said anything.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: I have no fear for the future of Western Canada, but I am alarmed over the future of some of the individuals who are living there at the present time. There is no doubt that prosperity will again smile over Canada and the Empire. Nothing can permanently retard the progress of the West, but the people are suffering there right now, and they will continue to suffer unless economic conditions can be improved. I recognize the difficulties that confront the Government, but if candidates for office were a little more modest in their promises during the election campaign there would not be the same resentment when promises are not fulfilled. Of course, as I have already said, those who knew the true circumstances were aware that it was absolutely impossible to bring about any great improvement in conditions in Western Canada in one year or in two years.

Hon. Mr. WILLOUGHBY: Well, they were not misled.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: But some were.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: Some simple people were.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD: But the honourable gentleman cannot claim refuge under that statement.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: No, I do not. But I certainly say that men who are experienced in affairs of government should not stand on a public platform and make promises that they know cannot be carried out. Some people who did not know any better thought that a change of government would bring about a general change for the better. I do not want to discuss politics, for I am concerned only about conditions in the West.

Hon. G. V. WHITE: But the honourable gentleman stepped right out.

Hon. Mr. SHARPE: The honourable gentleman must admit that the Bennett Government have tried to do something for the West, whereas the former Government made no such attempt.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: I do not want to discuss politics, but I can tell the honourable gentleman that during the last election campaign I did not hear anything said against the King Government.

Hon. Mr. SHARPE: It was not necessary to say anything. People knew all about it.

Hon. Mr. FORKE: The fact is that there were hard times, and people in the West got the idea that a change of government would result in a change in economic conditions.

I should like to say a few words about the mutterings that have come out of the West in regard to secession. Some people seem to think that Western farmers are a difficult lot, but it seems to me that the truth is simply that they are always alive and on the job, and the rest of the country will hear from them if they are not satisfied. I do not pay any serious attention to talk about secession. It is a symptom of discontent and hard times, a sign that everything is not well, and I do not think the Government and the people would be justified in ignoring that kind of symptom. But I am as sure as I am that I am standing here that there will never be secession on the part of the West; and we shall hear no more talk about it when conditions have improved.

The farmers in this country and all over the world are going to have a hard time for the next three or four years. Since the recent slump began, agriculture has suffered a depression to the extent of 60 or 70 per cent., while there has been a falling off in the textile business of only 13 per cent. I want to tell honourable members opposite that since last September textiles have even held their own.