

Supply—Agriculture

in the last 15 or 16 months during which time we have been in office to a degree that has met with the support of farmers generally across Canada as well as other citizens.

I know it is a great tribute to us that it is expected that all the promises we made would be completely implemented within the short time we have been in power. I ask my hon. friend to go across this country and to see whether the reaction he finds is not that never before in Canada has there been in such a short period of time during which a government has been in power when so many of its promises made to the electorate of the country have been carried out.

No matter what is done, my hon. friend will always say it is not enough. This will be the case no matter what course is followed. For years he was advocating, and in this he joined with the rest of us, the Saskatchewan dam project, but when we proceeded as one of our first acts to implement our promises in that regard we receive from him that qualified approval that we have not done enough in rendering at least \$75 million available to the people of Saskatchewan.

One of the first acts of this government when it assumed office was to commence a review of the agricultural policies and these studies have been productive of legislative and administrative action which has materially benefited agricultural producers in all parts of Canada. I point out to my hon. friend that while I am not among those who accept in their entirety the Gallup polls which are taken from time to time, since this parliament began we have received an increase in support from the farmers as well as from other citizens of Canada because this government has gone ahead in an endeavour to bring about a new concept of implementation of promises made at any time heretofore. One of the first acts of this government when it assumed office in the development of our agricultural policy was the legislation passed under the title of the Agricultural Stabilization Act which provides Canadian farmers with a degree of security they had not known before.

I should like to review briefly what this measure has achieved for Canadian farmers. As hon. members know, the Agricultural Stabilization Act provides for the mandatory stabilization of the price of nine key commodities at not less than 80 per cent of their average price for the preceding ten years. These nine commodities represent 65 per cent of the farm cash income apart from western cereal grains. This act also provides for the stabilization of prices of non-mandatory commodities at levels fixed by the governor in council.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

The effective prices fixed for the mandatory commodities have been about 100 per cent of the previous ten years average for butter and cheese, 85 per cent for eggs, 84 per cent for hogs and 80 per cent for cattle, sheep and wheat, oats and barley outside the wheat board area. Then other commodities for which stabilization is not mandatory have also been brought under the act at prices reaching up to 90 per cent of the ten year average for soy beans, 93 per cent for sugar beets and 110 per cent for wool.

The steps taken under this act have been successful in preventing serious price declines in several commodities. In others they have provided a measure of price assurance for farms which has enabled them to plan their operations with a high degree of confidence.

"Done nothing", he said. "Taken no steps in a year to implement the promises." But the hon. member will remember that under the stabilization act regard is had to the cost of production so as to bring about as far as possible that degree of security for the farmer which will bear a fair relationship to the cost of production.

In so far as the prairie farmers are concerned, while support was given to the measure when it was first introduced by the hon. gentleman and by those associated with him, it was always subject to some suggestion that it was not enough or that there was something wrong with it. The hon. gentleman has fine ability but he is developing a carping attitude. No matter what is done he always has to carp, he always has to indulge in some small criticism. This is not in keeping with what he used to be, and I point this out to him as one who has listened to him throughout the years with interest and admiration. The hon. member has developed a tendency which is dangerous to one so young as he, an attitude of continual carping, a continual dealing with small things, never prepared to say that anything is right or that steps are being taken in the direction of improvement.

To meet the specific regional problems of our prairie farmers, interest-free cash advances to the amount of \$34.5 million were provided to some 50,000 farmers on their farm-stored grain. I have already referred to the South Saskatchewan dam irrigation project, which is a major matter of benefit to agriculture. I can also refer to the steps that have been taken to prevent the dumping into Canada of agricultural products so as to preserve for the Canadian farmers their proper markets and to safeguard them against this type of competition which bears no relationship to actual cost. These are some of the things that we have