forecasts to the retail merchants that everything was fine, the wheat picture was wonderful, exports were the first or the second greatest on record in our history. But now the facts are coming in, and they have proven the minister wrong. The real facts of the situation are forcing a great many merchants in western Canada to the wall. Now is the time for action from the government to save the agricultural economy, to save the small merchant and to save the whole Canadian economy from one end to the other.

I will make another comment as to what one of the results of this latest reduction in the price of wheat may be. The price of No. 1 northern is down to $1.72 basis Fort William-Port Arthur, and the wheat board has to have 10 cents or so a bushel to operate, to pay its storage costs and to pay other costs of operations.

An hon. Member: The amount is $4\frac{1}{2}$ cents.

Mr. Argue: That is a different figure; it does not come into it at all. Therefore the wheat board, while it is operating on a gross margin of 32 cents on No. 1 northern wheat, has to pay out of that 32 cents a great many of its expenses. I should like to know from the Minister of Trade and Commerce—and I will sit down if he will give me the answer right now—will there be an interim payment of wheat for 1953? I ask the minister that question.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Certainly there will be an interim payment.

Some hon. Members: All right; sit down.

Mr. Argue: I would like to know then from the minister if we can expect the interim payment in the calendar year of 1954?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Yes.

Mr. Argue: I am glad; we are making progress.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Argue: If we can keep on this way I will never sit down. Now we are making some progress. Can the minister say how much it will be?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, we must have an understanding. What will my hon. friend do if I tell him that? He said he would sit down and he did not sit down.

Mr. Argue: Make it twenty cents and I will sit down.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that the best way to have questions put and answers given is to get the Speaker out of the chair and to go into committee of supply on the estimates of the Department of Trade and Commerce.

Mr. Harkness: Don't interrupt the auction sale.

Mr. Argue: As I have been saying, Mr. Speaker, one of the results of the reduction in the price of wheat is not only to make the economic position of the western farmer more difficult, but to bring about economic stress throughout the nation. Of one thing I am sure. There would never have been 6,000 men laid off in the automobile industry a few days ago if the western farmer had been able to sell a reasonable proportion of his 1953 crop. Every time the price of wheat goes down, every time the income of the western producer goes down, unemployment in Canada goes up. And the reduction in the price of Canadian wheat by $10\frac{1}{8}$ cents a bushel, unless something is done about it, is going to result in increased unemployment. That statement is borne out by a press release today by the Canadian Congress of Labour in which it says that in the light of events, in the light of the reduction in the price of wheat, the statement by the government that there would be an upswing in employment in the second half of the year looks silly. The Canadian Congress of Labour, the trade unionists, know that as farm income goes down unemployment goes up. If the government wants to reduce unemployment it has to prevent a further drop in agricultural income. I would go further and say it needs to restore agricultural income.

The Americans have reduced the price of wheat by 10 cents a bushel, but the Americans, under a Republican government, with the support of a Republican congress, have a parity support price for the main agricultural commodities, and that parity support price is being continued through 1955. Therefore the United States farmer is guaranteed, even with a drop in wheat prices of 10 cents a bushel, a price of over $2.20 a bushel. The Minister of Agriculture can shake his head.

Mr. Gardiner: It is 90 per cent of parity.

Mr. Argue: That is exactly what I said, 90 per cent of parity, $2.20 a bushel. The United States farmer is in a good position. There is a Republican government in the United States, but their agricultural policy is much more progressive than that of a so-called Liberal government in the Dominion of Canada. In Canada, with the drop in the price of wheat by $10\frac{1}{8}$ cents a bushel, the farmer is not protected. The Canadian farmer takes the loss and is being put through the wringer. The United States farmer has some protection. Over the years the Liberal party has