

## Supply—Agriculture

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Does my hon. friend want to ask his question now?

**Mr. Speakman:** I shall wait until after you complete your remarks.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I just wanted to answer my friend's intervention, and after that I could complete my maiden speech on agriculture.

**Mr. Speakman:** I did not interrupt during my hon. friend's speech, because I always follow him with very close attention.

**The Chairman:** The situation is becoming somewhat confused. The hon. member for Essex East had exhausted the time allotted to him to make his speech, and therefore it was the duty of the chair to tell him that his time had expired. Then there was an intervention which the hon. member for Essex East refused to permit. The Minister of Agriculture asked the committee to give permission to the hon. member to continue his remarks. I believe that to restore some order it would be preferable for the chair to ask the permission of hon. members for the hon. member for Essex East to continue his remarks. If this permission is granted, then possibly the hon. member could answer the various questions which members wish to ask and in addition perhaps satisfy the curiosity of the Minister of Agriculture. Is it the pleasure of the committee to permit the hon. member for Essex East to continue his speech?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I thank the committee. I just wanted the hon. member for Wetaskiwin to understand that I was not complaining about the fact that he asked a question. When I used the word "intervention" I was not using that in any offensive sense, because the hon. gentleman is always very courteous.

I followed with interest this last interpolation by the Minister of Agriculture, and as I say I do not think it really adds anything one way or another either in support of his position or denying the main observation I have made. What I wanted to point out was that by the use of section 7, to which I have referred, in the stabilization act, and the words, "shall bear a fair relationship to the cost of production of such commodity", that in itself is an argument establishing the fact that the allegation of the administration that they arrested the rise of production costs is so fallacious as to not really warrant repetition in any statement by the minister on future occasions.

Now, the words used by the minister when introducing this amendment are worthy of

note. I refer to *Hansard* for 1957-58, page 3827, where the minister said:

There is an amendment to be moved to clause 7. It is as follows:

That subclause (1) of clause 7 be amended by striking out the words "base price for" in lines 42 and 43, on page 3, and substituting therefor the words "cost of production of".

The minister went on, and this is a very significant observation which I hope will put at rest this understandable but fallacious boast of the minister that his government, and he as Minister of Agriculture, have been able to arrest the rise in the cost of production that threatens the farmers of Canada:

The purpose of this amendment is to make it certain that the board, in setting prices, will take into full consideration the cost of production and relate it to the price prescribed for any commodity rather than the base price for such commodity. This is one of the amendments which was requested by the interprovincial farm unions. I am quite happy to change the words "base price for" to "cost of production of" so it will be abundantly clear that is the determining factor to be kept in mind in setting the prescribed support price for any commodity. I would ask my colleague the Minister of National Revenue to move that amendment.

These words of the minister ought to be repeated and compared with the assertion of the so-called achievement of the government in doing something that no other Minister of Agriculture and no other government in the world has ever done in the course of human history. I find it difficult to understand how the price fixed can bear a fair relationship to the cost of production. But as the minister says, and I quote again from his remarks from the same page:

It is almost impossible to arrive at anything which can be considered as scientifically accurate in these cost of production figures and studies.

Now, if it cannot be scientifically determined in that way, how can my hon. friend make the statement he did on March 6, as a member of the government, that the Minister of Agriculture has been able as a result of the policies of his administration to arrest the rising cost of production?

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could ask the hon. member where he finds my remarks. I think the hon. member is confused over the cost of production and the cost-price squeeze. Of course he is confused over a lot of other things as well.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I notice that the minister says I am confused. All I can say is that if I am confused the minister certainly is more confused when one places these quotations alongside other quotations, especially in the same speech made by the minister. I will leave it to this house in the exercise of