

Supply—Agriculture

believe that the prairie people are entitled to something more than is contained in these estimates.

I thought as the Prime Minister was talking that we were back to the throne speech because he referred to a great many things which had gone on during this session, but there was one reference which I noticed he did not make. He did not say "I am still for parity prices". He forgot all about parity prices and all about his statements in the past. I think the Prime Minister used to be in favour of parity prices, in fact I know he was. The Minister of Agriculture never was, never has been and is not today. If there are some things which make us excited in this house, one thing which makes the Minister of Agriculture excited is an argument on parity prices.

Mr. Harkness: It does not affect me at all.

Mr. Argue: He sees in parity prices a great danger to the country. He says, "Look at the Americans who tried it." That did not prevent the Prime Minister himself over the years from advancing this policy day after day.

The Prime Minister has said that the farmers today enjoy a degree of security never before known. I will let the farmers themselves decide whether or not that is true, whether they are better off today with the average price of a bushel of wheat at \$1.23 or whether they were better off in 1943 after the price of wheat had been increased to \$1.25 a bushel. I will let them judge whether they enjoy a greater degree of security than ever before in the light of the reduced final payment on the 1956-57 crop year by 5 cents or 6 cents a bushel. I will let them decide whether they are in a better position with a continuing increase in cost of production.

The Prime Minister has said the government has kept its promises; he has talked about the commitments the government has made and some of them have been met. When they have been met we have fully supported such legislation, but some of the promises have not been kept. We were going to have a report on the old age pension system in the United States within three or four months after the appointment of Dr. Clark. We have heard nothing of it yet and I thought we were going to have immediate action after the receipt of the report. We knew there was going to be a federal-provincial conference; we knew that, the government said so, but it has not taken place. So that promise has not been kept. There was going to be no suffering from unemployment in this country—the Prime

Minister said that too. He said, "No unemployed person will suffer under this administration" or words to that effect, but we still have very, very widespread unemployment and a great many people think that this coming winter will be—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Argue: I am out of order—the Prime Minister was out of order and other members were out of order. The Prime Minister dragged in everything but the kitchen sink and I am at least sticking to some of the promises made by the government.

The Prime Minister made a great to-do about what he said was my general reaction to anything done by the government, that it is not enough and that it should be a lot more. I would say that is a reasonably consistent stand which I take, although I know of many, many things, probably most things passed in this house, which I have supported without question, because almost every item which goes through this house goes through unanimously.

I think, however, that the role of the opposition is as important as is the role of the government. The role of the government is to bring forth legislation and that of the opposition is to criticize such legislation and to point out its weaknesses. I believe that more could be done for western agriculture than is being done and that more could be done now. I would say to the Prime Minister that when I am fully satisfied with everything the government does, then I will cease to be of any value as a member of this House of Commons because it is the duty of members of parliament to do their best to improve the legislation before the house.

The Prime Minister said I am always trying to promote a march on Ottawa. I believe I mentioned that a couple of years ago—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: More recently.

Mr. Argue: No, I think I have used the words "mass delegation" since that time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Oh no.

Mr. Argue: If the Prime Minister would just hear me, I would say, with respect to his suggestion that I have been promoting a march of the farmers on Ottawa, that I am not denying that nor am I agreeing with it. All I am saying is that I believe I used the word "march" a couple of years ago but to the best of my knowledge I have since referred to it as a mass delegation.

Mr. Churchill: To Ottawa.

Mr. Argue: I would remind the Prime Minister that while he can take his pick and