

*Supply—Agriculture*

problems than any other government in the past. I think they have given a better hearing to western members than did any other government in the past. I think they can all say that never has a more united effort been put forth on behalf of the western farmers than has been put forth by the members of this government and of this party during the last session and up to date.

I just wonder how sincere this member from western Canada, the hon. member for Assiniboia, this preacher of doom, despair and destruction, has been in his support of the western farmer? How sincere are his colleagues in the group of eight, how sympathetic are they to the western farmers? I just want to read one short excerpt from *Hansard* of last year containing words uttered by a voice of the party that he represents. It is to be found on page 3509 of *Hansard* for August 14, 1958 and reads as follows:

This does not concern resources about which we know nothing. This relates to the breadbasket of this country, and I suggest to the minister that the breadbasket of this country is no longer on the prairies; it is in the boreal forests where we find our pulp and paper resources.

Then there was an interjection by an hon. member who said:

What does the hon. member for Assiniboia say to that?

Then the hon. member whom I am quoting went on:

He has just been complaining from behind. I do not mind somewhat overstating this point in relation to what the hon. member for Assiniboia tells me, but I think we have gone on long enough paying such marked attention to the agricultural interests especially to the grain interests.

What solution has the hon. member for Assiniboia put forth on behalf of the farmers? How does he propose to assist farming? How well has he briefed his group of eight? Without referring to *Hansard* I remember that last year one of his colleagues was speaking on agriculture and asked the western members who had been fighting for the western farmers why we could not solve our problem in the same way that labour solves theirs. He said that when labour encounters an increase in the cost of living all they do is go to the employer and make an arrangement with the employer whereby he raises their salaries. How can the western farmer go to his buyer and say, "My cost of living is going up; I want more money for my grain".

I also suggest that the hon. member for Assiniboia should brief the spokesmen for his party when he has duties elsewhere as to what the problems of the western farmers are. I suggest that by the tactics he has been following during this session—not so much during last session—he is doing every-

thing within the power of one man to divide the efforts of the western farmers in obtaining their rights. He professes to be an agrarian. From his numerous speeches we have heard that he is an expert in all fields. He is an expert on external affairs. He is an expert on shipping. He is an expert on labour. He is an expert on finance. In fact, last year when he was criticizing the budget he was asked how he would go about balancing the budget. He said that he would tax the millionaires and multimillionaires and get the money from them. I wonder how long that source would last. I wonder what he would do when it was exhausted. I wonder how long it would be before he got down to the timber barons and I wonder whether there would be seven instead of eight at that time in the little group to your left, Mr. Chairman.

I could say more but I think the remarks I have already made will prove to all Canadians that if he cannot convince that little group of eight he can never hope to convince the people of Canada. What does he hope to gain by his remarks this afternoon, by the co-operation that we as members from the west are getting from him? Is he seeking assistance for the farmers or political gain? I leave it to hon. members to answer that question. I suggest that the people of Canada are not as gullible as the hon. member for Assiniboia believes them to be.

With regard to the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Chairman, I have heard it said very often, quite often by the group of eight to your left, that the western farmer is not getting his fair share of the national wealth. The term "fair share of the national wealth" is one of many such terms that they use and the reason they use it is that there are no statistics to prove it. I have written to the dominion bureau of statistics to find out what the fair share of the national wealth is so far as the agrarian is concerned. The bureau does not have such figures on its files and is not able to give them.

However, I have heard the minister say that farmers comprise 12 per cent of our population and that that 12 per cent receive 6 per cent of the national income. I suggest to the minister that there is a problem in western Canada when 12 per cent of the people receive only 6 per cent of the national income. There must be something wrong with either the economy of our country or our mode of living. However, in my view the statement of the minister is not entirely correct because in the west at the present time stockmen are enjoying good returns from their cattle. There are a great number of stockmen on the prairies and this brings up the average.