

*Supply—Agriculture*

I do not think that this payment meets the situation. I do not think it is nearly enough. The second vice president of the Saskatchewan farmers union is reported in the newspapers as saying that he is giving Saskatchewan farmers advice to take the \$200 they are paid and invest it in a return railway ticket to Ottawa so that they can all come down here in a mass delegation and impress upon the government the need to provide deficiency payments in keeping with the requests of the farm organizations. This payment of a dollar an acre will mean \$200, of course, to the majority of farmers. Will that solve the economic crisis which he faces? How much money is it? It is 55 cents a day. I ask the government to consider how far 55 cents a day will go towards providing the farmer and his family with an income and how far it will go towards paying the cost of production of agriculture in this country?

The position the Prime Minister has taken in this house until recent months in advocating a system of parity prices, a system of support prices, based on a fair price-cost relationship was clearly a good one. It is just as valid today as it was in 1941 and in the subsequent years when he moved these motions. It is needed just as much now and we are apparently just as far away from getting it as we ever have been.

I would hope the government will meet the request of farm organizations for deficiency payments based on what I consider to be a reasonable formula, a system which does not ask for an ever increasing amount related to an increase in cost of production but which merely says there will be support prices which will not allow a further deterioration in the prices of wheat, oats and barley.

A few years ago we had a strenuous debate in this house at the end of the United Kingdom wheat agreement, resulting in the provision of \$65 million from the national treasury into that pool. This \$65 million was not then felt to be adequate from the standpoint of western farmers, but the need today is much greater than it was then because, since that time, the price of farm products has deteriorated by a very large amount.

**Mr. Harkness:** Livestock prices are away better than they were at that time and so are dairy prices.

**Mr. Argue:** The minister did not say when his party was advocating parity prices that the parity prices for grain producers would be forgotten about if the market for cattle appeared to be improved. No, Mr. Chairman, the farmers of western Canada will not be satisfied until the government provides them with a floor price, a continuing one, at a

reasonable level and until they feel the government has fulfilled its many promises to provide parity prices. The sum of \$200, as I said a few days ago, is worth just \$200, and to that extent is welcome, but \$1 per acre is a very small part of the amount of money necessary at this time even in the face of very large markets to give to the people on the prairies a standard of living which compares reasonably well with that of other Canadians.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I do not want to take up the time of the committee at great length, but having listened to the two speeches made by the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Assiniboia, there are a number of matters to which I think reference should be made.

I have listened to my hon. friend from Assiniboia on many occasions and he is the most generous man with other people's money I have ever known. He is all for the reduction of taxes, the almost removal of income tax on average incomes, but when it comes to generous promises and statements with regard to what he would do in the circumstances, he has no equal in this house.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I think that tribute is due to him because he brought up an example a little while ago as a passing jibe at the Liberal party, that having increased the old age pension by \$6 per month they had thereby annoyed the old age pensioners who, while pleased to receive that amount, found it convenient and proper to vote against the Liberal party. I would say to the hon. gentleman that if the amount of promises resulted in votes in keeping with the exaggeration of the promises made by C.C.F. members before the last election, the numbers in his party would not have been reduced from some 25 to 8, because as I remember it those irresponsible promises indicated \$75 per month for the old age pension. The people cannot be deceived by such promises which are made simply for political purposes.

One of the major reasons—and I say this with great respect to the hon. gentleman to whose advocacy I have always paid the strictest regard—for the diminution of national support for the party he represents is the irresponsible nature of the promises made by those associated with him.

I take second place to no one—

**Mr. Pickersgill:** In making promises.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:**—in my desire to see that agriculture shall receive its fair share of the national income, and that has been the purpose and the aim of the government which I have the honour to lead. We have gone forward