

appointing a farmer might be detrimental to the interests of farmers. A farmer might be appointed who would not be as well qualified to fill the position as the next man in line. Is that not true? Is there any guarantee that if this government does appoint a farmer he will be the best available man and will fill the position better than any one else? I do not think so. It does not necessarily follow. We hear particularly at election time, from some speakers and candidates in rural districts, the cry 'the farmer, the farmer, the farmer, I will do anything on earth for the farmer.' It is just stage play, the greater part of it. Sometimes the Grits are guilty as well as the Tories. The greater part of it is in vote-catching, and I believe this resolution is intended as a vote-catcher, but I believe it will fail.

Mr. STAPLES. I rise to a point of order. I ask the hon. gentleman to retract the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER. I do not think that is a point of order.

Mr. STAPLES. He says it is a vote-catcher and I say it is not.

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. gentleman has the floor.

Mr. MOLLOY. I have to repeat that if there was a strong move made by that strong organization known as the Grain Growers' Association, it is being used by the hon. member for Macdonald as a vote catcher. It was a vote catcher for the next election, which is at present a considerable way off. I hope that the appointment will be given to a western man, that he will be the best available man for the position, and that he will be a farmer. That is all I have to say.

Mr. D. B. NEELY (Humboldt). Mr. Speaker, when I first saw this resolution on the Order Paper, I was glad to feel that there was a certain ground on which I could stand shoulder to shoulder to some extent with a political opponent from the west. In the heat of elections we are apt to say of the other side. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' When I first saw the resolution on the Order Paper I was inclined to give the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Staples) a good deal of credit; but after listening to his remarks in support of it, I have to retract a great deal of that credit. I had supposed that the hon. member was moving the resolution in the interest of the western farmers; but the tenor of his remarks has been more in the interests of the political party to which he belongs. I have the honour of having been elected by the votes of the farmers of a district in what I consider to be the banner province of western Canada, Saskatchewan, and I want to say that the farmers of the west appreciate

the importance and value to the west of the Board of Railway Commissioners instituted by the present government. The farmers of the constituency I represent have no serious fault to find with the present government for the treatment they have received from that government since it has been in power. In the first place, the need of a board of Railway commissioners for Canada grew out of the transportation policy of this Liberal government. Until 1896 there were no transportation questions to solve in this country by a board of railway commissioners, because we had in the northwest only one railroad, what I conceive to be the greatest railroad monopoly on the continent of North America, the Canadian Pacific Railway. The few farmers who were in the west prior to 1896 were in the hands of that powerful corporation, because under the terms of the contract by which the railway was built, the government had practically no control over it or the way it did business. It could charge whatever rates for freight and passengers it pleased, and it had the farmers of the west completely in its power. The first remedy that came to the western Canada farmer was the vigorous action of this government in the construction of lines of railroad that would compete with the Canadian Pacific Railway. Having thus created the need for a board of railway commissioners, this government proceeded to establish that board, and it is something to the credit of this government that members of the opposition, when they speak on this question, are compelled to give the government that credit. Before this government came into power the farmers of the west needed relief in the very worst way; they came to this parliament again and again asking for relief; they came to this parliament asking for bread, and were given a stone. It was not until this government came into power that the farmers of the west received any of that consideration which his place in the industrial economy of this country entitles him to. The western Canadian farmer does appreciate this board of Railway Commissioners. It is a convenient court of appeal. It is a means of reaching the solution of the many transportation problems of the west that he never had before. With regard to that part of the resolution dealing with the appointment of a man to the vacancy brought about by the demise of the late Hon. Thos. Greenway, I believe that if a vote of the farmers of the west were taken on this question, they would not vote in favour of the resolution moved by the honourable member for Macdonald. The farmer of the west is not a sentimentalist, but is above all things a practical man, who looks for results, and is not above taking advantage of every kind of inventive and mechanical skill and using it for the betterment of his