

Mr. THOMAS E. ROSS (North Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, at this late hour it would seem almost a mistake that I should rise to speak on this debate. At the same time, there are a few thoughts which I wish to lay before the members of Parliament, and in availing myself of this opportunity of doing so, I shall endeavour to be brief; in fact, I may make the promise in the beginning that I will not detain hon. members any great length of time.

In the first place, I would like to refer to the fact that we have with us in this Parliament the first lady member of the House of Commons of this Dominion of Canada. I am glad to note that the situation is such that we have at the present time an opportunity of having our Canadian womanhood represented in the Parliaments of this country. I am glad to know also that the young lady member for Southeast Grey (Miss Macphail) belongs to this large Progressive group of which I myself am proud to be a member. I consider that is as it should be, owing to the fact that the rights of our Canadian womanhood have been won for them by the organized farmers of Canada. The honour for bringing that about is due to the Canadian Council of Agriculture; it was through the pressure that they brought to bear that our Canadian womanhood at last received what I always contended was only their just right of which they had been deprived so long.

Yesterday afternoon, while I was listening to the speech of the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. McMurray), my attention was attracted by a statement which he made to the effect that the British Empire had been built up on the foundation of personal liberty, and I take it for granted that the hon. member, in speaking of personal liberty in that way, expects us to interpret it in that broad sense of having all due respect and appreciation of the rights of others as well as being careful to see that we receive our own individual rights. To my mind, the true foundation of all national life, as well as private life, rests on practical religion, which includes not only the worship of God, but brotherly treatment of our fellow-men. If we adopt this principle as the basis and the only true foundation of success, whether in private or in national life, it will have the effect of removing from our minds the thought, and from our lives the spirit, of selfishness, and of replacing it with the spirit of service. We shall then be in the proper position to be worthy

representatives of the citizens of this great country of ours, who have committed to our hands the trust of guardianship, the responsibility of stewardship, and who are looking to us to see that this Parliament shall secure for the people of Canada a government by the people and in the interests of Canadian citizens as a whole. I hope and trust that we shall have that spirit of brotherly treatment of all men, and that legislation may be based upon the principle of equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

In looking over the Speech from the Throne, I notice that reference has been made to that decline in prices of farm products for the year 1921 as compared with those which obtained in former years. It might not be out of place for me to point out in this connection, that market values of farm products are set on the basis of supply and demand and not on the basis of cost of production plus profits, as is the case of many other lines of production, also that the feature of supply and demand is so greatly affected by weather and climatic conditions, over which we have practically little or no control, that it is quite beyond the score of men who engage in agriculture to regulate the market values for their products. While this may be true as to the world's market values of the products of agriculture, there is still another feature which has much to do with determining the price received by the producer and also that paid by the consumer of these farm products which are essentially classed in the lists of the necessities of life. The price received by the producer and also

that paid by the consumer are very largely determined by access to adequate markets and marketing facilities, also to the cost of transportation of the products from the producer to the available markets and of the system of distribution of the same. I might also say that I consider the system used at the present time in regard to the distribution of the natural products of agriculture is far from being satisfactory; that it operates to the direct disadvantage of the producer; that it is the means of greatly increasing the cost of living to the consumer, and that it is of profit, in most cases, only to many who have done little if anything to help along the real work of production. I would like to see the whole system of distribution investigated to the end that the producer and the consumer might be brought closer together, and that a system of co-operation