

Supply—Agriculture

itself. But the ones who interested me were those who had come from Rosthern constituency, those who had manned the polls in the March 31 election. They were almost a constituency convention in themselves. I remember seeing many of those who supported the hon. member for The Battlefords, the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre, the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan, and last but not least the hon. member for the city of Saskatoon. At Prince Albert on January 10 the situation was much the same. The chairman, Mr. L. A. Boileau, director of the Saskatchewan wheat pool, introduced me from the floor of the meeting; and I am happy to assure you, sir, and to assure the members on the government side of this house that there was a wealth of good will in the applause, not for me personally but for our dynamic leader and for this party as well.

In the earlier debates mention was made of Charlie Gibbings. The Charlie Gibbings I know is the second vice-president of the Saskatchewan wheat pool. The Charlie Gibbings I know will some day be president of that organization. There are many who say he should be president at this time. That is a decision which the directors, 16 of them, will make. I imagine they have found it difficult to overlook the experience acquired in the 23 years their present president has served in that capacity. When Charlie Gibbings speaks, he speaks for over 90,000 farm families in the province of Saskatchewan. He speaks for over 1,100 farm committees in the province of Saskatchewan. He speaks for the five to eleven men and women who comprise these committees scattered throughout the settled areas of the province of Saskatchewan.

You may be sure that these people are alive to protect the non-political status of their organization. Any man who took his politics as such into the organization and into the office would not last very long. I make no apology for coming to the defence of the Saskatchewan people and institutions. If, however, I have said today some things that shatter the sensitivity of some of those whom I am proud to call my colleagues, I make this apology for so doing.

I believe, as I am sure the Prime Minister does, as the Minister of Agriculture does, and as the majority of our members do, that the measure of achievement in regard to agricultural policy, as evidenced by actions taken or now in the process of being taken, do not commit our defence of those policies to the level of attacking personalities. Both the hon. member for Essex East and the hon. member for Assiniboia have indicated during the earlier proceedings of this house that the coming of this delegation held out the prospect

of political advantage for their parties. Indeed, I got the impression that they hoped that as a result they might indeed save their parties from utter extinction in the agricultural west. The hon. member for Essex East will hate to hear this, but he cannot possibly make political hay out of the coming of this delegation.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): No one is trying to.

Mr. Nasserden: The farm people of western Canada remember all too well how Liberal members of the House of Commons returned to their ridings pleading for patience and asserting that they had to humour their colleagues from other parts of Canada to get even the meagre consideration for which they had fought down through the years.

Nor need the C.C.F. members lift up their heads in anticipation, for it is a known fact that both the C.C.F. and Social Credit candidates of years gone by never failed to appeal except on the basis of a regional cry. The C.C.F. slogan in the last three general elections in grain growing areas was, "Fight for the west." What it was in other parts of Canada I do not know but I am aware that thinking people in Saskatchewan and particularly farm people acknowledged with the dynamic power of their ballots that there was not room for this kind of representation here in the House of Commons.

It is noteworthy that the delegation of western farmers as such came to Ottawa without any banners, placards or other trademarks of irresponsible organization. It remained for the C.C.F. to meet them with these things and to provide them with C.C.F. literature. It was indeed the cheapest type of tactic they could have devised.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, would the hon. gentleman permit a question?

Mr. Nasserden: As soon as I am finished.

Mr. Argue: Very well.

Mr. Nasserden: It is for these various reasons that I have been deeply disturbed at the outright rejection of the acreage payment plan by both opposition parties and by the delegation in their presentation. In effect they are saying that we should forget the needs of the small farmer and of the average size farmer. They are asking us to ignore the trend toward larger and larger grain farms and the detrimental effects this trend is causing on community life on the prairies. They are asking us to forget our responsibility to those who need help most by virtue of the inequitable share of farm income that they are presently receiving. They are asking us to turn away from a program aimed at the building of a diversified family farm