

the attention of parliament itself. If it is coming to the stage where a member cannot do that without being accused of criticizing, casting reflections, and so on, what is to become of parliamentary government? Almost every day, I talk with various members and they say they do not know what is going on. The departments are so busy that the ministers do not know what is going on. Civil servants may think they are right. Doubtless they think members of parliament are just a nuisance; nevertheless we are supposed to have democratic parliamentary government in this country. In what I said, and in quoting the opinion of people right on the ground, I have been trying to show that in this case officials may have made a mistake, so far as agriculture in northern Saskatchewan is concerned. I admit I may be wrong, but it was my duty to bring this matter to the attention of the committee. At any rate, I wish to thank hon. members for the sympathetic hearing they have given me, right or wrong.

Mr. GARDINER: I do not want to block my own estimates, but there is one point I should clear up. I knew all about this item when the decision was made to cut it out, and I examined into all the farms before any of them were cut out. I take full responsibility for all the reductions which I have recommended to the house and full responsibility for all the increases, and I think the officials of the department will agree with me when I say that I personally put up all the arguments to the officials against closing Rosthern and some of the other farms that have been mentioned on the floor to-night. But I was convinced by information placed before me that this farm eventually ought to be closed. I was convinced that Windermere farm eventually ought to be closed, and that the others I have spoken of ought to be closed some time in the very near future; and having been thus convinced, I came to the conclusion that the proper time to make the recommendation was now when we need the money for other purposes.

I do not want any hon. member to have the idea that this is merely a recommendation of officials of the department. The initial suggestion of reduction was my recommendation, coming not from officials at all, but from the government of Canada through the treasury board of which I am a member. It was suggested that the regular estimates of my department were to be cut down by at least \$2,000,000, and in order to make up that \$2,000,000 we had to do certain things. One of the things we decided to do was to reduce now what we intended to do sooner or later

in any case, namely, by closing down some of the experimental farms. I was responsible for pressing reductions on the officials. They are responsible for recommending to me the selections and giving reasons as to why the particular farms which have been closed should be closed. But I finally made the decision and I take all responsibility for it.

Mr. BLACK (Cumberland): Have any farms or illustration stations been opened in the last five years?

Mr. GARDINER: I have not the exact number, but very few have been opened within the last five years; two substations, one in British Columbia and one in Quebec, I understand.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: What is the number of dominion experimental farms throughout Canada, and their distribution by provinces?

Mr. GARDINER: There are twenty-six main farms.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: How many in Quebec?

Mr. GARDINER: There will be four left in Quebec; three are being closed there. In Ontario there are two.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Which ones are being left in Quebec?

Mr. GARDINER: Sainte Anne de la Pocatière, Lennoxville, L'Assomption, Normandin and a small substation.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Is there one in Hull?

Mr. GARDINER: No, not in Hull. We have a laboratory over there.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: That is part of the central experimental farm, is it? Just a laboratory?

Mr. GARDINER: That is right.

Mr. NICHOLSON: The minister answered part of my question in regard to experimental work with sugar beets, but I did not hear him reply to the question whether sugar beets produced in Saskatchewan are satisfactory for the refining of sugar, and whether seed is being produced.

Mr. GARDINER: Yes, the sugar beet produced in Saskatchewan has a good percentage of sugar. In dry years the yield per acre is light; that is the chief drawback.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Where is the seed procured?

Mr. GARDINER: The seed has all been imported in the past, but provision has been made under the agricultural supplies board to get seed from available sources of supply.