

*The Address—Mr. Foster*

I venture now to offer to yourself, Mr. Speaker, a word of congratulation upon your re-election to the high and honorable office you now hold. I have a pleasant recollection of your eloquence in those years when first I came to parliament, and while it is a matter for regret that the House should so seldom be inspired by that eloquence it is a compensation that hon. members, the younger members of parliament particularly, should have the benefit of your kindly and invaluable guidance as Speaker of this House. I desire also to compliment the present leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen) on the victory he has won. Appealing to this country, as he did, at the head of a group of fifty members, he was returned with such a measure of confidence as is seldom seen in any democratic country in the world. It speaks something for the character and the ability of a young man that, by studious application to work and by the faithful pursuit of his principles and ideals, he should endear himself and his followers in the hearts of the people and so commend himself to the strong common sense and the genius of the Canadian public as to come back to parliament with such a strengthened following as the right hon. the leader of the opposition has behind him in the House to-day, and of whom the present speaker is one of the most humble.

Before touching on the matters related to the amendment to the Address, I desire to say a word or two apropos of the debate which has just taken place between my hon. friend from Lincoln (Mr. Chaplin) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb). It seemed to me that the hon. member thoroughly repudiated the suggestion put forward in this House in regard to prices obtaining in the United States and in Canada respectively of various commodities, but I took the Minister of Finance at his word when he said that the price of butter in New York was 42 cents and in Canada 42½ cents. When he made this statement however I wondered, assuming it to be true, what became of the argument which we have heard all over the country from east to west that protection will raise the price to the consumer. I thought surely the Minister of Finance had not that argument in mind when he made that statement. Now having lived some time on the other side of the line, where I enjoyed the benefits of protective tariff, a tariff higher than any which this country has ever had, I have no hesitation in saying that the cost of living in that protected country is not a bit higher than it is in the Dominion of Canada where the tariff is less than half as high as it is in the United States.

[Mr. Foster.]

Any hon. gentleman who spends any time in the United States can verify that fact for himself.

What does happen with regard to the price of butter and of agricultural products generally under protection on the other side of the line? This thing, a very important thing: under protection they have a more stable and a more uniform price for the things they have to sell. We talk about the wonderful markets there and we forget the peculiar conditions that exist in the United States as in other countries. We talk about sending across the border our products such as potatoes, fruit and so forth. Well, let me tell hon. gentlemen who talk that way that if we want to send our produce over there we have to go over not only a tariff wall but something else as well. And I would invite the attention of the House to that something else. It is this: in the great centres of the republic to the south of us, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, there are trade organizations of all descriptions, dealers' associations, and so on, and you will find that the market is preserved to their own people, and preserved at a uniform level. That is a tremendous advantage to the home market and the fact is that in Canada the home market takes care of almost 90 per cent of our production. If it were not for the home market in the United States there would be chaos and the farmers of that country know it. They are all convinced of this fact with the exception of a few odd ones here and there in the farmers' organizations who are ambitious to become president or secretary of their particular organization, to attain office and probably run for Congress or the Senate. These people set up the usual argument in order to get into the limelight and to win for themselves positions in the public life of the country. But the solid common sense of the farmers of the United States is in keeping with the New England common sense as exemplified by Calvin Coolidge, which the farmers of that country will endorse for some years to come. They are satisfied to continue on that basis.

I desire to make a few observations with regard to the mover (Mr. Elliott) and the seconder (Mr. Lacombe) of the Address, to which the amendment before the House has been moved. I am a little more familiar with the language of the mover than with that of the seconder, but, Sir, I hope some time within the next twenty-five years to have the privilege of availing myself of a knowledge of that language—a language which I love second to none on earth, the tongue native to yourself, Sir, and to your compatriots of the province of Quebec. Having