

Supply—Agriculture

seventy-five miles. I ask the minister to use his good offices and make some effort to alleviate this irregularity which is prevalent in my riding. Since I represent a large group in a large riding, and since I speak for them, you will hear more from me.

Mr. Bater: Mr. Chairman, we shall now leave British Columbia and come back to Saskatchewan. In doing so may I say that I happen to be one of the fourteen Liberal members who come from the province of Saskatchewan. I started on my way on June 27 last.

At the outset, sir, I should like to concur with other hon. members in congratulating the Prime Minister on his return to this house as Prime Minister of this great dominion. Along with other hon. members I should also like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. Last, but far from least, may I say I am pleased to see that we have with us in the house tonight one who just a few weeks ago we were afraid might not be with us on this occasion. I am referring to the one who is in charge of the department which we are discussing tonight, namely, the Minister of Agriculture.

Since we are dealing with agriculture estimates, Mr. Chairman, I shall try to stay as close to that subject as I possibly can. I shall try to the best of my ability to stick to the point in my few remarks.

After listening to the many speakers today we have all come to the conclusion that agriculture still has many problems, hazards and pests. We have heard of the new pest from Manitoba, the aphid. We know we have drought in southwestern Saskatchewan. We had the grasshopper. Then we have heard of a new one, one that I had never heard of before, which is attacking the nut growers of British Columbia. They too have their problems. But their problem is one which has been mentioned once or twice before in this house. I refer to tariffs. In connection with agriculture I have heard some say that tariffs should be reduced or taken off. Others have said that they should be increased. I hold in my hand a letter which I received from the secretary of a rural municipality in Saskatchewan, which brings to our attention that there are other pests in Saskatchewan at this time. This one happens to be weeds. In this letter this municipality advises me that during this season they have used upwards of a hundred and thirty thousand pounds of atlacide in the attempted destruction of toadflax. They, too, think they should have assistance.

Something was said about the loss to western agriculture on the price of wheat. I question whether we have lost anything. Let

[Mr. Byrne.]

me repeat what I said last summer on the hustings, and I say it now in all sincerity, that I do not think there is any government in any country of the world—and I am taking in a lot of territory—which has endeavoured during the pre-war, the war and post-war periods to do more for the stability of agriculture than has the government of this country. When we take into account subsequent payments for our wheat, in face of the fact that we have sold all our wheat, I think it is possible we will not have lost one cent.

I wonder if we are altogether fair when we make comparisons with our neighbour to the south in the matter of grain prices, especially wheat prices. I believe I am correct when I say that our neighbour consumes about 80 per cent of the wheat she grows, whereas we export 80 per cent of our wheat. Our problem, and the problem of this government, or any government which may hold office in Canada, has been and will be the great problem of marketing our grain. I believe this government will see to it that we get every cent that it is humanly possible for us to get in the sale of our wheat.

Something has been said about prairie farm assistance, and the minister has said that amendments will be brought down. I have every reason to believe and hope that in the amendments consideration will be given to bringing under this scheme more farmers who have less than eight bushels to the acre, and less who have more than eight bushels to the acre.

I shall conclude my few remarks by saying that I believe this department, under the direction of the Minister of Agriculture and his deputy minister, will keep its sights high and see to it that measures are brought down from time to time, possibly in this very session, which will bring about a greater measure of stability for Canadian agriculture.

Mr. Smith (Calgary West): Mr. Chairman, I understand you are keeping us very close to the item under discussion this evening. Therefore I must justify what I intend to say, because I intend to speak about higher education. I say that with some confidence, because the minister and I graduated from the same school of higher education. He may disclose that in what he does and says now; but I am frank to admit I was a faker there—and some of you think I am now.

In those days in the place where we went the courses were limited under which one might graduate. There was natural science—and that was the one I chose because, upon inquiry, I found that was the easiest way to become a bachelor of arts—there were classics, moderns, mathematics and philosophy. That about ran the gamut of those