

*Supply—Agriculture*

**Mr. Studer:** It is not my intention this evening to prolong the discussion on the estimates; but since I am one of those who have come from Saskatchewan, one of the new members, as we are called, perhaps it would not be amiss to let the committee know that fourteen of us came back from Saskatchewan this year, and we think that if we kept quiet all during the session hon. members might not be aware of the fact.

Since it is customary for one who speaks for the first time to extend congratulations, perhaps it would not be out of order if I went along with the others. Most of those who have spoken so far have extended congratulations to the mover and seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. I can assure them in all truthfulness, as one of the new members, that the speeches were two of the best I have ever heard in this house, and I can also say that they were two of the best speeches that I ever expect to hear.

Compliments have been paid in considerable number to prominent people, including our Prime Minister. It was suggested that this one or that one was responsible for the winning of the past election. We should like to agree with all that has been said. Remarks have also been made to the effect that agriculture is the backbone of a nation and that the economy of a nation is founded on agriculture, or we can call it food. I believe it is. I believe that the general economy of the world is founded on food. I so believe for this reason, that man can get along without anything else except food. It is the one essential of life. I believe that the economy is based on food. If that is true, and if the welfare of the people of Canada, as well as that of other countries, is based on the production of food, and if the welfare and prosperity of the farmers are based on what has been produced in the way of food, and on export and its prices, then we should compliment one man who has been outstanding in connection with the prosperity of Canada, namely, the present Minister of Agriculture. If prosperity has been in evidence as a result of agriculture, he is one of the men who have brought this about. In saying that, I do not wish to detract from what has been said in all kindness—and I agree with it—of anyone else, or of any other member of the government. These remarks apply not only to the Minister of Agriculture but also to his assistant, the deputy minister, and to his other assistants. If we continue to have prosperity in Canada it will be due to the prosperity of agriculture. When the farmer is prosperous everyone is prosperous. That has been true up to date. I do not think this government can ever originate or bring into

[Mr. Gardiner.]

operation any plans which will make the farmers too prosperous. I do not believe that that has ever existed on earth. The only danger to this country and to every other country arises when agriculture is not prosperous, because the whole economy of everybody in this country is built on a prosperous agriculture. We should keep that in mind. There is no danger of agriculture ever becoming too prosperous. The more prosperous it becomes the more prosperous everybody else in this country becomes.

I should now like to turn to the estimates if I may. I just wish to deal with one item. I hesitate to throw a discordant note into what has been said so far this session. Much has been said about improving conditions and this is as it should be. Even the opposition has been in general agreement that the country has not done too badly up to now that the government has not done too badly and that there is some measure of prosperity in the country. There is some evidence of international wheat agreements which will result in security, and there is some stability in regard to prices. We are all interested in increasing agricultural prices and making them permanent. However, in some parts of the country, I regret to say, the people are still suffering. The hon. member for Lake Centre dealt with it just a moment ago, as did the Minister of Agriculture this afternoon. I believe he said that in some large areas in Saskatchewan the situation is as bad as it was in 1937. I am one of those who believe that when one member of the body suffers the entire body suffers. Not all the communities in Canada are prosperous. We want to endeavour to bring all of them along, at least in some degree.

Incidentally, I believe the expression "crop failure" was coined in the constituency of Maple Creek. I believe that was one of the first places where people suffered such a thing, if I remember correctly. I have been there for thirty-three years and I cannot give any good reason why I am still there, because on an average in the last five years I have not had five bushels to the acre. But I believe there is good reason for saying that I along with others, have stayed there because we are firmly convinced that over a period of time we will create some stability in the country. We know that we will, and we are not prepared to throw up our hands and to leave the country, and thus follow the line of least resistance. If we were to leave the country it would be detrimental to its further development.

We are not prepared to do that. We believe in that area of the west, and as time goes on and as problems increase in this world, one looks at the map of this country and o