

Mr. GARDINER: Six farms and nineteen illustration stations.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Is there no protest from Quebec?

Mr. GARDINER: Not up to the moment.

Mr. TUCKER: I do not want to take up too much time, but I should like to ask the minister if he does not think that, by transferring elsewhere the higher-paid officials, or some of them, and carrying on that farm on a subsistence basis, it would be possible to operate it with a net expenditure of about \$9,000 at the outside over and above receipts?

Mr. GARDINER: We are carrying it on this year at an expenditure of \$8,000, but we are not doing real experimental work on the farm. If we carried it out merely on a maintenance basis, we would not be doing anything that any other farmer in the community is not doing. The farm of Seager Wheeler, which is across the road and to which the hon. member has referred, has been operated for many years by Seager Wheeler, and some of the most important experimental work carried on in the west has been done by him on his own farm. It is true that for a few years the department employed him. We gave him an honorarium of \$1,500 a year over a period of years until he reached the age of seventy, and by means of that honorarium he carried on much experimental work in connection with fruit. In addition he was responsible for the production and propagation of some of the best strains of wheat we have had in the west.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: When was the allowance discontinued?

Mr. GARDINER: About two years ago.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I do not know anything about the merits or demerits of the Rosthern farm. The hon. member representing that district put up a battle in defence of the farm, but he said something with reference to the officials of the department of the sort that I have listened to from several members on various occasions. It is something that does not appeal to me as a new member. It strikes me that a public servant who cannot rise and defend himself should not be so criticized unless there is great justification. I have been intensely interested in agriculture for many years, and I know, from personal contact with the deputy minister of agriculture and the director of experimental farms for Canada, that in these gentlemen we have two of the most efficient public servants in the country, men who give long hours of work and are quite efficient in the discharge of

[Mr. Rowe.]

their duties. It is not becoming for members to cast reflections upon either of these public servants, as has been done this evening—and I have heard the same thing on other occasions from other hon. members with regard to different departments. Such criticism should not be made without proper justification. I wish to pay a tribute to the fine work rendered the country under two different governments by the deputy minister of agriculture and the director of experimental farms. I have known of new offices created in the last few months in connection with which salary and living allowance were much higher than either of these public servants receives, and I doubt very much whether the men appointed to those offices will render one-quarter of the service that these men are giving the country. I want to compliment them upon the splendid work they have done.

Mr. TUCKER: The hon. member has raised a point that has been rather disturbing to me. It seems to me that we are getting away from parliamentary government and moving towards bureaucracy. If members of the civil service make recommendations or say something about somebody or suggest that something should be done and a member of the house ventures to disagree with him, that member is supposed to be casting reflections upon him. I do not cast reflections upon anyone, but when I am elected by the people I have as much right to have an opinion as to what is best for the country as civil servants have. I think it is time we began to see where we are drifting in this matter. If the members of this house feel that an expenditure on a subsistence basis of nine or ten thousand dollars can carry the Rosthern farm, in order to have it expanded again when financial conditions are better, and the department says "No, in our opinion, it should be closed," what happens? I leave it to the hon. members here. But we are the ones that are answerable to the people; we are the ones elected to run the country. But who is tending more and more to run it?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The government.

Mr. TUCKER: The leader of the opposition says, "the government." I know that a busy minister is in such a position that he cannot look into all the details of his department. The civil servant responsible makes a recommendation to him. He may make that recommendation with the most honest intention, but he may be mistaken, he may be misinformed, just as members may be mistaken at times. It is our duty in such a case to rise in our places and bring the matter to