

Supply—Agriculture

a great deal of wheat on hand we seemed to have low prices. Finally, with the concurrence of the province, the federal government established the Canadian wheat board. I think the committee is with me in congratulating the Minister of Agriculture on the matter of marketing wheat. Just after that wheat board came into existence we began to get floods of propaganda to the effect that the farmer had lost some \$400 million. Since that time participation payments have been made to the extent of nearly \$400 million. I noted here this afternoon that one of the hon. members claimed that we have lost \$525 million. I almost hope that is right. The Minister of Agriculture somehow or other produced the \$400 million. I wonder if somehow he now can produce the other \$125 million. I think we have been fairly well dealt with.

Mr. Byrne: I should like to associate myself with all those who have extended congratulations to all the ministers and their associates. I am certainly wholeheartedly in agreement with everything that was said, and I do not wish to take up any more of the time of the committee except to congratulate the minister under questioning on his recovery. I am certainly glad that he is back with us today.

The constituency of Kootenay East, which I represent, is an extensive one and its industries include farming, mining, logging and small businesses. Although it is not a good political position to take, it has been customary for me to say exactly what I think; and on this occasion I intend to do so. I have been elected from a diversified constituency. You will find in that fact conclusive proof that I am a Liberal and have been elected on the same basis as a great number of hon. members here also who are prepared to look after the best interests of all in our society.

With regard to the farmer, the hon. member for Yale and the hon. member for Kootenay West outlined the difficulties which are prevalent in the fruit-growing areas. There is a large fruit-growing area in the western portion of my riding. These hon. members must have made an extensive study into the difficulties that prevail among the fruit growers. I should like to say further that I hope the government will continue in their policy of expenditures looking for further markets, markets which are certainly essential to the welfare of the fruit-growing areas.

It has been said by the hon. member for Yale that the domestic market is one on which we are prone to rely. I feel quite certain that when the estimates for some of the other departments come up we shall fully realize that this government is making forward plans which will ensure the develop-

ment of Canada in general and British Columbia in particular, thereby providing employment for a greater number of people in that area. There is one small matter which is of concern to the Creston valley, to which I refer. During the war years and shortly after the war a great number of people migrated to the balmy Creston valley. Probably they had not heard the speech of the hon. member for Vancouver South but they must have heard a similar one because there is an excessive number of people there at the present time. In order to sustain the people who are there I should like to suggest that in the estimates the government make every effort to see that irrigation is provided for some of the arable lands in that area. By doing so they would ensure an efficient industry being established there. In my riding milk is 22 cents a quart. I am sure that a market could be provided in Kimberley, which is a mining area, and also in Trail, which has a large industrial plant. If some of these fertile fields were irrigated it would help to solve the problem of a slightly overpopulated district.

We have one problem which I think is unique in my riding and it concerns the farmers in the great Columbia valley. The Columbia valley is some two hundred miles long. I might add that my riding is another fifty to seventy-five miles longer than that. It runs approximately close to three hundred miles in a northern and southern direction. The farmers in the northernmost portion of my riding are in the position of having a very small market for their produce, unless they are able to journey to Calgary, a city with which you are all familiar. It is a logical market for their produce. They also desire to purchase in the city of Calgary equipment, supplies and so on for their farms. However, they are in this unique position. Although they are only one hundred and sixty-three miles from Calgary they find it necessary to travel four hundred and seventy-five miles to get there. They have to travel from the northern to the southern part of the riding and then westward to the Crowsnest pass and up to Calgary to take the smallest amount of produce to market. That is a condition that I heard of only in the last year, although it has prevailed for a considerable length of time. The reason for that is that they do not have highways connecting the Columbia valley with Calgary and other large centres in Alberta, but they have two national parks between them and this large city. Because they are not allowed to drive even the smallest truck carrying the smallest amount of produce through those parks into Calgary, they find it necessary to travel these four hundred and