

*The Address—Mr. J. A. Ross*

products, fruit and vegetables, and so on, to expand their production year after year throughout this country, telling those producers that, by taking less than prevailing world prices during wartime and after the war, they were assured of good overseas markets in the future. You know of the glowing pictures of future export trade which were painted during the election campaign last year by both the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) and the Minister of Agriculture.

In a recent speech at London the Minister of Agriculture stated that he had information and had known for two years past, that Britain did not want to buy further produce from Canada other than her wheat. Can you imagine a responsible minister of the government, who had that information, encouraging as far as possible the expansion of agricultural production in this country? I know of many poultry people and others who had invested their money in plant expansion. Now they are suddenly informed that they had been misled, that there are no markets for them. I think it is most unfair that if these ministers had that information it was not imparted to those producers throughout the country.

I have been amazed to read in papers from coast to coast reports of the speech of the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture. I shall quote a paragraph from the *British Columbia Country Life*:

Advice of Robert McCubbin, parliamentary assistant to Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture, to his fellow farmers, so the Canadian press reports, is that they develop their own markets and do not rely on the dominion government to help them secure outlets. Under normal circumstances, that would be sound advice but under present circumstances it is difficult to understand how such advice could be followed, because the farmers are helpless, in respect of developing markets within the British commonwealth of nations and in foreign countries.

It is difficult to understand. I have great respect for this gentleman to whom I am referring. He is the parliamentary assistant to the minister and assisted him in encouraging the farmers from coast to coast to expand their development; and by controls, embargoes and so on made it impossible for these same producers to obtain what they might have obtained during those years. Now when they find themselves in this dilemma they are put on their own to find markets to sell their produce. I say that is a very surprising statement to come from one occupying the position of parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture. He apparently spoke as one of and for the government. He supported every one of these measures of control and embargo to which I have referred,

and which prevented those producers from obtaining as much revenue as they otherwise might have obtained.

Also during those war years the ex-prime minister, the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, and the Minister of Agriculture, assured us repeatedly that by taking less money than they otherwise might have obtained these overseas markets were being assured to those producers in the future. Therefore it is all the more disappointing. I cannot find language strong enough to emphasize the seriousness of this situation. Since I am one of those who have spent their lives studying agriculture, I believe it to be the basic industry of this country upon which all other industries must build if we are to have a prosperous and united people in Canada. Therefore a great and serious obligation rests upon this government to make good some of those losses during the very trying and difficult days that lie ahead of us in the near future.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer. I want to urge the government to set up a standing committee of the House of Commons on veterans' affairs. I think that is very important. There are many problems which face our veterans in this country. Reference has been made in the speech from the throne to bills which will be introduced having to do with veterans' problems. That in itself is further proof of the necessity of what I suggest.

In my opinion the consolidated measure in connection with national defence, when it is introduced, should be referred to a committee for consideration. I realize that last year the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) had strong arguments against the formation of such a committee. If he still retains those arguments, then I would point out to him that he himself is a veteran and I am sure every veteran, irrespective of the corner of the house in which he may sit, is vitally interested in national defence at this time. I would imagine that, if a special committee were set up to consider matters connected with national defence, many of the members who served on veterans' committees would be members of such a special committee at this session. Therefore I urge with all the power at my command that a veterans' committee of the house be set up to look after veterans' affairs, and that this very important measure should be referred to it.

I wish to quote some observations of the Minister of National Defence which appeared some time ago in *Maclean's* magazine. He stated:

One reason why parliament has not functioned better is that 245 members cannot get down to close grips with a subject. Also there is not enough