

The Address—Mr. Low

of the national income. The figures will bear out what I say. The farmers, who make up approximately 20 per cent of the population of Canada, received in 1953 only 9.9 per cent of the national income. I am speaking here of course of income originating in agriculture. We have to allow for the fact that some farmers do get income from other sources, but even allowing for that the percentage would certainly be no more than about 11 per cent.

I say the problem to be faced in a country like Canada is to adopt a policy which will guarantee the farmers a fair share of the national income. It would be only just and right if the farmers as a class make up 20 per cent of the total population of our country that they should receive something like 20 per cent of the national income. There has hardly been a time in the history of this country when this has been the case.

Some means will have to be found to help our farmers, under the archaic policy this government persists in following, to receive a just and fair return on their capital investment, their hard work and their managerial skill.

I point out that it is going to be pretty difficult for young people to start in farming. In these days it requires a pile of money to get started in the farming business. If we do not take every measure that is possible to help to make our farming population prosperous, then there can be no hope that the rest of us can ever enjoy any measure of continued prosperity. There is a relationship, as has already been pointed out this afternoon, between declining farm income and the growing unemployment in Canada.

In concluding this part of what I have to say, Mr. Speaker, there is one other matter I should like to mention. One hears a good deal of unfair criticism of the farmers, and particularly of the prairie provinces, in connection with the price feeders in the east and in British Columbia have to pay for their feed grain. It is not the fault of the farmers at all, although they are too often given the blame.

I think there is a situation here in Ontario that should be thoroughly investigated. Feeders often order feed of a specific grade—say grade five or six—and they are charged prices on the basis of those grades. When they receive the feed the farmers often find that somewhere along the line, after the grain has been shipped out of the prairie provinces, dealers have mixed into it a grossly inferior quality with the result that the feeders do not get the grades they order and are made to pay for.

[Mr. Low.]

The Canadian wheat board claim this is outside their jurisdiction and that they cannot do anything about it. Well, somebody should be in a position to investigate it and take corrective action. I say this government is in a position to do so, especially since it is subsidizing freight costs of much of the feed shipped into eastern Canada from the west.

I think, too, that the recent Stephen F. Murphy case points up the need for a very careful examination of some of the Canadian wheat board practices in connection with the shipment, or attempted shipment, of feed grains from the prairies into British Columbia. It should not be beyond the abilities of the members of the wheat board and of the board of grain commissioners to work out some method whereby individual feeders of poultry or livestock can buy and ship their own feed grain supplies without the interference or silly regulations of the wheat board.

All these things, and more I could mention, lead the farmers of Canada to feel that this government has failed them very badly. Taken as a whole the farmers in western Canada, at least, feel they are looked upon by the government as second-class citizens, and something will have to be done to correct this situation.

An eye should also be kept on the Crow's-nest freight rate. There are forces seeking to cancel this freight rate, and they should not be allowed to do so until such time as the freight rates generally have been equalized, and until we are certain that through the equalization principle justice will be meted out to western Canadian farmers.

There are other things on which I would like to have spoken, but I see my time has now expired and I certainly do not wish to go beyond it even by a minute.

Mr. F. T. Fairey (Victoria, B.C.): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak in this debate at this time one would have thought by now we would have learned something from the opposition and from those who wish certain changes to be made before the final adoption of the address, so ably moved by my two colleagues the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Leduc) and the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Carrick). To the congratulations already offered them I add mine, and also my good wishes for their success in this house.

It is too bad, Mr. Speaker, but the confusion which seemed to arise from the nature of the amendment would lead one to suppose the opposition has found very little fault with the contents of the address. What they have to suggest are additions rather than changes.