

*The Address—Mr. Frenette*

Mr. Speaker, I find that the brief submitted by the chamber of commerce refers to congratulations to be extended to the government, and it gives me pleasure to read the following excerpt:

We should like to express our satisfaction at the substantial improvements brought to the wharf in Portneuf. We are convinced that harbour facilities now to be found in this locality will be of great help in attracting new industries.

Mr. Speaker, to be honest, it should be pointed out that those congratulations are meant for the members of the previous government, since they are the ones who took the necessary steps to have the wharf in Portneuf restored. And, in all sincerity, I am glad to recognize the fact.

On the other hand, there is another problem. The riding of Portneuf has a magnificent deep water wharf where 10,000-ton vessels can berth at high or low tide. Although the government allocated \$4 million for the construction of that wharf, it remains that that harbour has not been used up to now.

I feel that in view of the needs of the area and the facilities offered by that harbour, the government and its technical advisers should study the possibility of putting it to use.

Mr. Speaker, the brief also mentions problems relating to feed grain. I quote:

It must be acknowledged that eastern farmers are going through difficult times. Therefore, we feel that one way to improve their lot would be to facilitate delivery of western feed grain to eastern farmers at reasonable prices.

We expect, sir, that you will strongly support any appropriate measure taken by the government.

Mr. Speaker, needless to say that I am most happy to speak not only on behalf of farmers of my riding but also of those of all eastern Canada, to ask again what we have been claiming for two years, that is to make it easier for eastern farmers to buy feed grain so that they can reduce their production costs and live decently from their farm operations.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat tempted to ramble off into digressions to point out, after many previous speakers, the state of decay in which agriculture finds itself, particularly in eastern Canada.

One has only to travel through our rural districts, more especially in the province of Quebec, to note with dismay how many farms are deserted. Our concessions are more than ever depopulated and farmers increase the number of unemployed in our cities.

In fact, even after having worked without respite, those well-meaning persons who, with an enormous amount of work and sacrifices, had become owners of a small plot, are now compelled to give it up because they are unable to survive. Why? Because, as I said earlier, farmers find no customers for their products.

[Mr. Frenette.]

However, the remedy seems simple enough: increase the purchasing power of the people who need those goods, thus stimulating the purchase of farm products.

But the same point, the same problem of unemployment is constantly brought up again. In my opinion, if there was no unemployment, the farming situation would inevitably improve. By solving unemployment, we would also solve the problems of our farmers. It is essential to carry out vigorous measures to fight against this evil.

I would like now to quote part of a lecture given on January 31, 1964, by Mr. Fowler, president of the Canadian association of pulp and paper producers in which he dealt with unemployment. I was struck by Mr. Fowler's words:

Let us imagine that through an incomprehensible reversal of our economic system, the rich, instead of the poor, would be unemployed. Let us suppose that tomorrow, 303,000 persons, among those with the highest income in Canada, found themselves out of work. Every Canadian now earning over \$7,500 a year would then be unemployed.

And Mr. Fowler concludes by saying:

I hope this will not happen.

Mr. Speaker, I was amazed at the logic of this item.

But, if the situation were reversed and the rich were unemployed, instead of the poor, I wonder whether the government would not then do its utmost to correct the situation without delay.

Unfortunately, it is the poor, the low wage earners, who are being exploited and who suffer most from the deplorable situation resulting from unemployment.

Mr. Speaker, since all of us, as members of parliament, advocated a certain program in assuming our term of office, I feel it is only fair towards the people who elected us to denounce unemployment as the worst evil that is reducing us to slavery. I feel that we must at all costs make every effort, not only to find a solution to this problem, but to check it altogether. In my opinion, this situation has already lasted long enough.

And how should we go about it? I feel that an efficient and immediate solution to the unemployment problem, which has already been suggested by many others but which I should like to repeat, would be the creation by the Bank of Canada of new capital that municipalities could borrow in order to carry out public works or public utility projects.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe in the irresponsible diffusion of unlimited capital, but I sincerely feel, like some members of the government, that it is possible to issue money bearing no interest. I think this could and should be done. In fact, we have just seen