

The Address—Mr. M. Lessard

ment in Quebec or that Quebecers remain idle and live on social welfare? Should that be the aim I have but one thing to say: people will have to accept to pay more taxes in order that Quebec may have higher equalization payments, to enable her to buy certain products. It will be one of these two things. Either we will produce or else the other provinces will do it and give us the money to buy their products. This is a decision that will have to be made.

As for me, I will not accept that. We have too much self-respect, I believe, to do so. The total manufacturing value and the total value of farm production in Quebec are clearly inadequate and there is no question of reducing them. On the contrary. With more than 40 per cent of the unemployment in Canada, Quebec must increase its production and ensure the necessary jobs through a growing manpower.

Raising barriers between provinces will surely not enable us to solve the many problems that are facing us.

The Speech from the Throne says that a federal legislation will be necessary to institute a national marketing agency. We all know that at the end of the last session, similar legislation had been proposed in Bill C-197. Unfortunately, it was not passed in time and the situation has so rapidly deteriorated that it has to become now an urgency.

It is likely that a similar legislation will soon be proposed to this House, and I hope that hon. members will want to give it priority and consider it with all the possible dispatch which requires this decisive situation in the marketing of Canadian farm products.

● (8:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Speaker and hon. members of this House, I strongly urge you to consider the present situation in the field of marketing agricultural products as highly serious and dangerous. The balkanization of our country has started. There is a real danger of escalation if we do not act rapidly, firmly and in full collaboration with all provinces. I urge all members to use all their influence in their home province to stop this dangerous trend, bearing in mind that we are all bound to lose in such a game, some more than others.

[Translation]

It will be easily understood that I cannot resume my seat without saying a few words on the dairy industry.

It is indeed too early to claim a victory because there are still many problems to solve. But, one thing seems sure now and, barring any unforeseen circumstances, the end of the current milk year will restore a reasonable balance between consumption and production of these goods in Canada.

That result has not been easy to realize, and Quebec producers in particular know it well. But, after all, the difficult decisions which the government has been forced to take last year have borne fruit and today, we can look at the immediate future at least with more optimism.

[Mr. Lessard.]

Our supplies of powder milk are now normal and prices have levelled off. The production of cheese will all be sold at a good price and we might perhaps even be slightly short. As to butter, the very high supplies of last year will have been reduced by more than half and, for all practical purposes, will become normal.

Mr. Speaker, if we have at all the co-operation of interested groups, it should be possible to maintain the balance, which would subsequently permit better prices and therefore greater net income for our producers.

We have asked that milk production be reduced and we have had our wish. It is therefore normal for the producers having left that line of production to go into other fields, and more particularly in the province of Quebec where the number of those having done so is quite high. Farm production in Quebec will therefore have to diversify and needless to say competition will be stronger. Hence the importance of having a good network of marketing boards administered under a national legislation which would enable farmers to share in the Canadian market on a sound competitive basis.

Something will have to be done to prevent the provinces, through provincial marketing boards, from trying to go their own way by sacrificing the efficiency of costs and quality at the expense of consumers.

As a rule, I think that we can feel moderate optimism for the years to come. The great situation has greatly improved and it is obvious that the ensuing good results will be felt in other related areas.

Before concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank all my colleagues for the good words they had for me and they may rest assured in advance that I will continue, as in the past, to work in co-operation with them in the best interests of all Canadians and, in particular, of farmers.

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected to Parliament in 1962, the day of the opening of the session and especially the Speech from the Throne were for me quite an event. I had hoped to discover a wonderful program for the new session and I was somewhat disappointed.

In 1963, I felt less enthusiasm and in 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969 I had a totally different opinion so that in 1970, with this Speech from the Throne, I am confirmed in my opinion. In fact, this speech is but a wonderful piece of fireworks.

Through this torrent of words and all those high-sounding sentences, the awful reality still remains. I shall attempt now to present it to this House.

Before going any further, I cannot avoid an old tradition whereby congratulations are offered to the mover and the seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne (Mr. Trudel and Mr. Douglas). They have shown some talent in speaking in such great length.

After the first sitting, I retired to my office in order to read over the text of the speech which had just been given to us. I had received several invitations to attend official functions but I was unable to go because I had to