

*The Address—Mr. Castleden*

farmers, the great co-operatives, the provincial federations of agriculture, the Canadian federation of agriculture and the Co-operative Union of Canada show that the farmers of Canada have the capacity to organize and to work together. They can work together with similar democratic groups, with people chosen in their own field, to sit down and discuss the problems which face them and to find a solution satisfactory to those people whom they democratically represent.

It is not necessary to have regimentation. It is not necessary to have bureaucratic government officials operate the wheat board; but it will require a government favourable to the ideas of those people who believe in some of the basic principles which they represent, to make possible through legislation the organization of our trade, our production and distribution through such boards.

In recent years the development of farm organizations has been a remarkable and a very healthy advancement in the Canadian economy. They have shown a fine capacity to organize and to work together. They have grown in recent years until now they exercise a tremendous influence in an organized way, and with a humanitarian objective, which is very important, and which commends itself to people of good will not only in this country but abroad. In my estimation, much of the hope for the world of tomorrow lies in the growth of this co-operative effort, and it must have scope in a world-wide way.

In spite of protests from our group in this house against the speculative marketing and the handling of coarse grains in 1947, this government proceeded to ignore our recommendations and our offered amendments to the wheat board act to bring coarse grains under it, and in the fall of 1947 they threw coarse grains out into the open market. Again in 1948 the government brought down an amendment to the wheat board act and passed the buck to the three provincial governments of the west. What was the result? The Liberal coalition government of Manitoba and the Social Credit government in Alberta refused to pass enabling legislation, and the result was that the grain exchange carried on the handling in 1948. But now the powers of the farm organizations are having some effect and they are beginning to win their point. From press reports already out, I believe it is evident that an amendment to the wheat board act will be brought forward in this session, which will finally bring coarse grains under the orderly marketing system of the wheat board.

With Canada's livestock and dairy industry and with our production of meat, eggs, cheese and other dairy products dependent upon the

[Mr. Castleden.]

production of coarse grains within this country, Canada's policy for the production of these products is tied up completely with the production of coarse grains. A proper floor price is an essential part of any over-all agricultural program.

It may be necessary within the next few years to do what is being done in the United States at this time. They have organized, and have recognized the need of a national program for the allotment of food, to make it possible for those people in the low-income brackets—and we have many such in Canada—to purchase essential foods. I suggest a program of that kind should be under survey at the present time to take care of the situation when distribution in Canada and abroad begins to fail.

Such a program would also be necessary in the international field. The stability which would result from its establishment is essential for the prevention of another depression. It may require as much ingenuity, work and detail as was required in the preparation for war. This will be a war on poverty and on depression.

We in this Co-operative Commonwealth Federation believe that some of the basic principles in the co-operative movement will have to replace some of those principles, if they may be so described, which operate within the economic system under which we live, before a solution of this problem will be possible.

We join with the Canadian co-operative union in asking that the government remove the taxation against the three per cent of savings, which is treated by the government as a basis for taxation. We realize that sometimes the government has difficulty in recognizing what are and what are not co-operative organizations. If it would pass a federal co-operatives act, something which is needed very badly, it could define in that act what a co-operative is. It would permit the formation of co-operatives throughout the whole of Canada, permitting them to do business interprovincially rather than confining their efforts within the boundaries of a province. Such an act would make it possible for people to organize co-operative corporations so that they might operate in any province, and throughout the whole of the dominion.

Under present legislation, co-operative organizations which organize on a commercial basis or for commercial purposes are compelled to operate on a share capital basis. That method is contrary to the principles of many co-operative organizations, and is opposed by them.