

employs a million workers at the present time, and which is sending the very best of munitions to every battlefield in the world. The Midas touch of the minister has done much to transfer the peace-time economy of Canada into an arsenal of democracy.

At this point I should like to pay tribute to those thousand or more so-called dollar-a-year men who are making a great contribution, and who have been doing so at great cost to themselves. They are getting little credit for it, but I believe that they are doing a great work. If there is any selfishness in their actions, it has not become apparent.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) has shown himself to be a master in the art of government. He has gathered around him a group of ministers who are capable of meeting the great responsibilities which are theirs. He has been a great Canadian leader for a quarter of a century. He has held this position in times of sunshine and in times of storm; he has held it in spite of rapidly changing public opinion. He has done much to maintain unity in this country and goodwill in an international way, and I think the records of history will justly value what he has done.

I desire at this time to refer to a few matters which are of particular importance to the district whence I come. To a great extent we are interested in the agricultural industry. While the lot of the farmer is better to-day than it has been for many a long day, at the same time there is a class of farmer, there are certain people whose lot is anything but happy. Figures have been quoted in this house to show that during the long ten years of the depression, 33.9 per cent of the people of this country, those who were engaged in agriculture, received only from ten to fifteen per cent of the national income. Their share is higher at the present time, but it still falls short of what it should be.

Those depressed years left a huge mountain of debt. The debt of the farmers of the west is estimated to be \$800,000,000. In Alberta alone the farmers owe the banks \$35,000,000; they owe the machine companies \$50,000,000, and they owe mortgage companies and individuals a total of \$100,000,000. The Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act has reduced this debt by some \$21,745,000, but there are still obligations that cannot be met. These cannot be met for one reason, namely, that the farmer is being asked to produce at a figure below his actual cost. During the last few years the farmer has received 45 cents, 50 cents, or perhaps up to 70 cents a

bushel for his wheat, but Professor Hope of Saskatchewan university has estimated that for the farmer to be able to meet his costs and have a decent standard of living, the price of wheat on the farm should be at least 90 cents a bushel for the average grade. It may be asked how this industry has survived in view of these circumstances. It has survived because the farmer started in with considerable capital which has gradually been reduced until it is all gone. Some farmers have survived by going into debt and assuming mortgages, and others have survived because their wives and children have stepped in and done a great deal of the work of the farm.

In our economic set-up there is one great maladjustment. The home is the very cornerstone of our civilization. The end and aim of all legislation should be to make conditions better in the home. Yet our farm homes are not what they should be. They have not the conveniences which they should have and which the work of the farm warrants. Men and women on the farm visualize the advantages of general and technical education for their children; their children dream of obtaining this education, but their dreams seldom come true because their hopes are often blighted by despair.

My contention is that farm products should not be sold below cost of production, and my further contention is that farm production should be regarded as a munition of war and should have the same sound, practical support and assistance given to those manufacturers who are producing other munitions of war.

Mr. HOMUTH: The government can remedy that.

Mr. GERSHAW: I am pointing out that the parliament of Canada can remedy that. I want to enlist the support of members of this house for a small section of our population who at the present time are suffering from what I have referred to as a maladjustment.

Farming is a skilled occupation, and yet the return for this work is much less than the return for so-called unskilled labour in our factories. It is a dangerous occupation; yet it is without the protection of the provincial workmen's compensation acts, and the farmers are without the ability to protect themselves with accident insurance. It is a lonely, isolated occupation, and yet it is without the comforts of modern homes and present-day inventions which add so much to the zest and interest of life. About the only security that many of the people engaged in this occupa-