

*The Address—Mr. Fulton*

confronting it. I say that advisedly; because if the record is consulted it will be found that for two years prior to last spring I had spoken on the necessity of having a survey made of the Fraser river system through the joint operation of dominion and provincial authorities, with a view to developing a project or projects to provide under one scheme for power, irrigation and flood control.

I have urged for several years that the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act be extended in a large way to our province, and that the engineers under that act, in conjunction with engineers of the federal Department of Public Works and provincial engineers, should undertake a full-scale survey, and the construction of projects which would serve the three purposes I have mentioned. Had we done that we would have provided at one and the same time for national development and national safety. But until this last fall, when we had a national disaster, nothing was done.

Even today, what is being done is likely to be another example of "too little and too late". I shall return later on in my remarks to deal in detail with the requirements in connection with power and flood control projects. At this moment I mention the government's failure in the matter as one of the most glaring examples of that lack of action and lack of leadership which so clearly afflicts them, and which so strongly supports the amendment we are discussing tonight, one of want of confidence in the government.

Other failures of the government could be mentioned, after a reading of the speech from the throne. For instance, there is the failure to indicate any intention to set up a standing committee on veterans affairs. There is the fact that again for another year there is to be no provision for a standing committee on national defence. It has been urged by hon. members of this party that both these branches of public activity should be the subject matter of the deliberations of standing committees of the house, so that these continuing national problems would not be left to be dealt with in a haphazard manner by way of emergency developments, but on the contrary would be the subject of continuing scrutiny, development and attention in accordance with their needs.

Then, the speech from the throne makes no reference to any program for the development of resources. I have referred to the power, flood control and irrigation requirements of our own province. The speech makes no mention of a national marketing act. True, we have before the house at the present time a scheme to extend the arbitrary powers of the Minister of Agriculture in respect of certain commodities; but we have

no indication with respect to the Natural Products Marketing Act which is so widely demanded and needed by the agricultural producers in every field of agriculture in Canada.

There is no mention of necessary tax reform; no mention of reform in the method of collection of taxes, or in the method of assessment—and particularly with respect to agriculture. There has been no amendment, so necessary and so just, in the manner of assessing and collecting penalties—assessing the interest on arrears when the only fault has been that the department had been late in making its assessment. Finally, there has been no mention of a provision to implement what we have been awaiting for three years, namely the principle of the basic herd. It is true that, as a result of conferences which have just been taking place, this matter may have finally been ironed out. But we must remember that the matter has been under consideration for at least five years, and has been under active debate in the house for three years. Yet the principle has not yet been applied; with the result that many farmers, elderly men, who have contributed so much to the development of this country, have been unable to sell out and unable to retire; or, if they have taken that step, and have retired, they have had to hand over by way of income tax anything up to 50 per cent of the proceeds. It is gratifying to hope that the basic herd principle has been finally worked out; I should hope we would hear a statement clarifying the situation in the course of the next week—and not later than that—from the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann).

Then, again, there is nothing definite in the speech from the throne about the trans-Canada highway. It is true that we have announcements from time to time, pried as it were out of the minister by a shoehorn process. These are announcements with respect to meagre developments in the construction of a trans-Canada highway. But there is no indication that the government has a trans-Canada highway policy.

I should like to refer to that matter in some detail. For three years there has been standing in my name on the order paper a resolution advocating the development by the federal government of a highway policy, the appointment of a highways commission, and the commencement of immediate negotiations with the provinces leading to dominion-provincial co-operation on the construction and maintenance of trans-Canada roads. Then, there has been another resolution, in the name of the hon. member for Cochrane