

Certain things were said this afternoon in the speech of the hon. Minister of Justice (Sir. Lomer Gouin) that I did not altogether agree with, but there was one statement with which I was heartily in accord. I think the end of his speech was ideal. It reached a high plane. He said that, as far as he was concerned, he was going to support the Liberal party in the interests of, not one province, but the whole of Canada. I believe that is the plane we ought to endeavour to reach, in order to solve the great problems that confront us. I share with the hon. member for North Winnipeg (Mr. McMurray) the splendid optimism that he manifested in his speech. He expressed the belief that the Liberal party was going to put into effect the policy which they have proclaimed. I believe and I intend to believe it until I find it otherwise.

Before dealing with the Speech from the Throne, I wish to say a few words in regard to my own constituency and the western part of Canada. I have noticed that hon. gentlemen from the Maritime provinces have spoken of justice and what is demanded by those provinces. We have heard similar statements in regard to Ontario, its wonderful powers, its electrical forces, and its ability to pay such a large amount in federal taxes. I want to say a few words in regard to Saskatchewan, although I know that what I am about to say will not meet with the approval of all the people in that province. I heard of a certain person who spoke in Ontario some time ago, and some of the western papers said that her statements make excellent anti-immigration literature. Be that as it may, I believe that the truth will make you free, and for that reason if I can impress upon these eastern people the real conditions of the West, I feel that my speech will not be in vain. It was stated by the hon. gentleman from North Winnipeg (Mr. McMurray) that to-day farming is not a paying occupation. The same sentiment has been expressed by a great many members in this House. I can only corroborate what has already been made. As far as my personal experience is concerned, I am intimately associated with at least 500 families of farmers, and I want to say without any exaggeration, that not 5 per cent of those people during the last two years have been running their farms on a paying basis. Just before I came to Ottawa a gentleman got on the train with me, and we were talking about

[Mr. Lewis.]

conditions. He said to me "I actually paid out last year, or the year before, \$11,000 more than I received. This year I have done almost the same thing, having paid out nearly \$10,000." Then when you take into consideration the fact that he has an equipment valued in the neighbourhood of \$140,000, on which no interest has been paid, and that he did not receive a cent in wages for managing that great business, you can begin to realize the appalling conditions that exist in Western Canada. With regard to a great majority of those 500 families, almost without exception the half-section farmers have each lost in the neighbourhood of \$800 to \$2,000. I am not going to say, Sir, that these men are failures. We have the finest people that can be found in the country. They are intellectual, industrious and persevering. Their patriotism has been manifested without any reserve, and for that reason we cannot say anything against them. As regards the land there, I believe it will make good; but it will make good only when conditions surrounding agriculture and those elements that enter into the production of agricultural commodities are made satisfactory to the western people. I might go on along those lines and point out some of the appalling conditions. I do not wish to dwell very long on this matter; but, in my experience, I have been in homes where there are families of five and seven living in two rooms eking out a bare existence, having merely a little flour and a little coal to keep body and soul together. I can say honestly, without fear of contradiction, that within a radius of eight miles of my home, at least twelve to twenty families would have absolutely perished had it not been for the charitable associations around them. That is not good literature to induce immigrants to come to this country, and it is up to us, as a Parliament, to legislate as far as possible to remove those conditions and to make the basic industry of Canada profitable to the masses. That is all we are asking at the present time.

I notice further, Sir, in the Speech from the Throne, that it was mentioned that we had not escaped suffering as a result of the Great War. We did not expect to escape that suffering. We know our Canadian people were willing to bear the burden and to enter into that Great War, and they have sacrificed manfully with the end in view of bringing victory to the world. At the same time, it is also said that the keen observers of this land have spoken with