

in the neighbourhood of the Trans-Canada Highway, whose boys, aged 18 to 25, come to the city each morning, work as carpenters or otherwise in the building trades, and then go home. I am not going to discuss the reasons for the discrepancy of incomes, but it is a fact, and an important phase of the problem before us, that what the farmer receives for his products is out of line with the level of costs of living in Canada generally. From time to time when a farmer brings in cheques signed by his boys, I ask, "What are they doing?" and I am told, "They are working for the Superior Construction Company" or some other city industry; and this indicates, of course, that these boys are no longer engaged on the home farm.

**Hon. Mr. Farris:** Is it not also true that people work harder and longer hours on farms?

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Yes, and probably that has some influence on the movement away from farms. But primarily what makes these young people come to town is that they can earn more money there. Once they have become city workers their easier life inclines them to stay where they are, but the original incentive is the prospect of better pay.

I should like to illustrate one aspect of the general question. In the province of Manitoba, in the area between Brandon and Portage la Prairie, may be found many hundreds of acres of sandy land. In the early days of settlement the homesteaders cut down the woods and tried to cultivate the land. In this attempt they failed, and they moved out. Subsequently trees began to grow again in these districts as well as in other areas of the province. I suggest that the committee would do well to inquire what is being done in Manitoba and other provinces about the reforestation of lands of low fertility. I have noticed that a large and well-wooded district between Brandon and Portage has grown up entirely through natural causes. With proper attention the growth would probably have been twice as large.

This committee has a very difficult job. I am reminded of the time when the Senate undertook an investigation of income tax matters. We know that our committee on that occasion was not only able to help in the solution of one of Canada's important problems, and thereby do a real service to the people, but that its work reflected great honour on the Senate itself. Here is another opportunity for this chamber to offer the Canadian people, if not a complete solution, some valuable recommendations and suggestions, and, at least, to present the facts of

the situation in respect of our agricultural lands. I think that is the most important thing the committee has to do. Immigrants are needed; Canada will become the home of a much larger population, and if people who come here to settle can be enabled to make a good living it will be all the better for Canada and for the world at large.

What the committee will have to do is to gather information not only from the provincial agricultural officials but from those engaged in reforestation, for each province has already done some of this work. The provinces are disturbed about the present situation and are endeavouring to reforest various sections.

Then there is the question of oil production and conservation. Some areas that are barren so far as agriculture is concerned are tremendous oil producers. I was amazed to learn that the area around the little village of Virden, Manitoba, produced enough oil last year to meet the general oil consumption of the whole province. Oil is now being found in large quantities in Saskatchewan, and honourable senators are familiar with the fabulous oil story in Alberta and northern British Columbia. The committee will have to take into consideration the fact that our oil-producing lands must be protected.

I do not think it is a question of moving people from one locality to another, but rather of showing them what present areas are best suited to produce crops. Fifty miles east of Winnipeg the land is so poor that a farmer cannot make a living off it, no matter how capable he is. I have been through that district time and time again, and I know that its soil lacks some important element. A farmer cannot grow a successful crop there, yet twenty miles on the other side of that district may be found some of the finest farming land in all of western Canada. Similar variations in soils are characteristic of large areas in southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. All these conditions will have to be investigated thoroughly.

I am certainly not a soil or agricultural expert, but I have seen areas in Ontario and Quebec that look to me as though they are not capable of growing any crops. Our committee will have to gather information about all these places not, I suggest, from experts whom the committee might hire, but from experts in the Government service who are thoroughly acquainted with the problems and difficulties faced every day by people living on poor lands in different parts of the country.

The problem of trying to make better use of land for agriculture is not a new one. It has existed for many years. When I was a member of the Manitoba Legislature, some