

Some of our provinces have made a move to increase the old age pension. My own province of Manitoba has gone so far as to say that it will pay its share of this additional \$5 that we are asking for. I plead with the federal government to meet that and raise the pension to at least \$25 a month. Our present old age pension is a blot on our nation. If we are going to provide a pension at all, let us give the old people something a little more liberal. And I would have it that they get the full \$20 without any deductions.

Alberta, I believe, has also made some provision to increase pensions. Both these provinces in the speech from the throne in the legislatures announced it just the other day. Therefore Alberta is in the same category as Manitoba. I believe British Columbia is willing to grant old age pensioners an increased pension.

Mr. FAIR: Alberta has done it.

Mr. LEADER: I am glad to hear that; hats off to Alberta, and I mean that, with the greatest respect.

A few minutes ago I mentioned the electrification of rural districts. I am glad to inform hon. members that in 1935 I brought this matter to the floor of the house as a scheme for the relief of unemployment. I pointed out that there was no reason why our farming communities could not be served by this great labour-saving development. Surely they have as much right to the use of electricity as have the people who live in the cities. I pointed out at that time, and I believe it is true to-day, that one of the reasons why so many of our young people leave the farms is the lack of these very conveniences of which I speak. I am satisfied of that. I have lived among these people. I have seen farmers who have had private plants installed at terrific expense. Their neighbours will say, "Well, that is very nice, but we cannot afford it."

It is pointed out in the speech from the throne in the Manitoba legislature that a commission was appointed last June in that province to investigate the possibilities of electrification in the rural sections. The committee brought in its report in which it was declared that such a scheme was feasible, and that an expenditure of approximately \$16,000,000—just postage stamp money, in these days of war finance—would be sufficient. It was pointed out, too, that the equipment would be much cheaper if the tariff on imported electrical equipment were removed. I want to see all possible industries grow and thrive in Canada, but we must not forget that there are other institutions which must thrive

also. It was pointed out by the *Winnipeg Tribune* that the tariff on electrical equipment was 40 per cent. I had not thought it was that high, but I presume that the war regulations have brought it to that level. It was advocated by the commission that the tariff be removed or reduced.

The people of Canada have expended \$100,000,000 in erecting a power plant in northern Quebec on the Saguenay river. That is a tremendous sum, when compared with the \$16,000,000 required in Manitoba. In our province farmers have to do without electrical power, although it may run right past their doors. It is found in almost every town or village in the province, but it is so costly that the farmers cannot take advantage of it. I visited the airport at Macdonald, which is only a few miles from my home, and I could not help wondering why we could find money so easily to build a power plant out from Portage la Prairie to service this air field, while the farmer living alongside the air field does not have that service. I am not finding fault with that situation; I do not think any one should be allowed to tamper with the plant in war time. But why can we not take advantage of it after the war is over? I think we are going to. These people who ask us where we are going to find the money will not be listened to any more. I believe that was almost the expression used last night by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid). As a post-war measure I could think of no better plan. Both farmers and manufacturers will prosper by such a policy, because the installation of hydro power throughout the rural parts of Canada would be bound to help industry and labour. It would help Canada as a whole, and that certainly should be our object. It is the object in my mind to-day.

Coming from Manitoba I should like to say something about a recent change which will affect not only our province but the whole of Canada. I make reference to the selection of John Bracken, the ex-premier of Manitoba, as leader of the Conservative party. Along with that he takes—or his party takes—the name "Progressive." Mr. Bracken was our premier for over twenty years. When he was called upon to lead a progressive government in 1922 he had had no previous political experience. I do not think, in fact, he had any political affiliations. It was a case of the job seeking the man, and that fact in itself marks Mr. Bracken for distinction.

During his tenure of office in Manitoba his government was usually referred to as the Bracken government. He stamped it with his personality, and his record can best be judged by twenty years of unbroken rule. While I