

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: May I ask whether the productivity of the farm will be the only consideration? A great deal often depends on legal conditions. For instance we have all read of the plight of the share-cropper, when the mere owner carries away the bulk of the produce and the man who actually does the work has very little left.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: That is probably what we call an economic and social problem between the worker and the owner of a farm. I think the committee will confine its inquiry more to the use to which the land can be put.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: It won't get far if it limits itself to that.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: I do not think there are a great many share-croppers in Canada. The purpose of the committee is set forth in the opening paragraph of the Speech from the Throne, which reads:

It is proposed to recommend in the Senate the establishment of a committee to consider what should be done to make better use of land for agriculture and thus to contribute more effectively to the improvement of agricultural production and the incomes of those engaged in it.

The subject raised by the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck) might come within the bounds of that purpose. However, that will be for the committee to decide. I do, however, want to emphasize—and I think I speak for all members of this house—that there is no desire on our part to encourage farmers who are happy and making a reasonable living for a reasonable amount of work on their farms to leave their farms and seek a livelihood in some other part of the country.

The task of the committee is an important, interesting, and yet onerous one. I would not try to anticipate its findings, but I am confident that during the course of its hearings the problems to which it will address itself will emerge with much greater clarity, and so will the most constructive solutions to it.

Honourable senators will readily recognize, as the Prime Minister himself emphasized recently, that land use is a matter that can be studied in the Senate with great advantage to all the Canadian people. In fact, I am certain that this will be one of the most important studies that the Senate has yet undertaken.

No doubt the inexorable need to earn enough for themselves and their families will continue to persuade Canadian farmers to abandon land that is no longer capable of providing them with an adequate living in reward for reasonable endeavour. No doubt they will continue to seek employment in

other industries, or move to more productive farms or new land. But we realize too that the deterioration of income on a marginal farm is a gradual process, and this, coupled with the ordinary human inertia that dissuades us from leaving old, familiar surroundings, no doubt has delayed some moves too long.

It is, therefore, may I say, the challenging task of this proposed Senate committee (a) to make a broad survey of land use in Canada, (b) to focus public attention on all aspects of this problem, and (c) to invite the best minds in the country to set out their views as to the appropriate solutions, particularly as these would benefit the farmer and tend to raise farm incomes.

Honourable senators, it would not, I think, be too much to hope that this committee, and the light it will throw on the vital subject it is to study, will mark a time of reassessment and re-thinking about this great material source, our land, that will be for our whole economy, and especially for the Canadian farmer and his family, the opening of a new and brighter chapter of progress and prosperity.

Hon. John T. Haig: Honourable members, I wish first to congratulate the honourable Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) on his statement of the facts in support of the motion. This is probably one of the most important assignments which the Senate has had to undertake since, some twenty-one or twenty-two years ago, I entered this chamber. I would say, to begin with, so that there shall be no misunderstanding, that I do not agree with the remark of the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck). The subject to which he referred may be important—I do not question that—but it is not part of this investigation. In one province, or even in one section or half-section, one may find, in close proximity to land of the highest productive quality, land which is entirely unproductive.

Before dealing with this aspect of the matter, however, or with the general problem involved, I wish to say a word or two about the movement of people from farms. It is a matter not specifically covered in this motion, but it is of great importance, especially in areas near the larger cities. To speak of Winnipeg, the city I know best: there are many farmers' sons who come to town in the morning by car, work there all day, and return to their farm homes at night. They are attracted by the incomes which men employed in the city get in comparison with those engaged on the farms. I know at least half a dozen farmers living within a radius of twenty-four miles of Winnipeg,