

*The Address—Mr. Ritchie*

I believe that at this critical period in our agricultural development we must be prepared to act swiftly and boldly and we must not allow ourselves to be bound by past practice or traditional methods. I believe we must be prepared to be bold, radical innovators, to scrap the old grain legislation if necessary and start from scratch with new ideas and new techniques to meet new conditions.

Views on a two price system for wheat vary. Much can be said both for and against it. But, since this government has promised it to the wheat producers during the past three general elections, I think it only fair they bring it forward for our consideration. If it did nothing else, such a close scrutiny of wheat producing, shipping and marketing problems would undoubtedly produce a great deal of useful information.

As I see the situation, we need to work on two levels: One is immediate, emergency type legislation to tide our agricultural industry over a difficult period, and the other is to provide a long term solution to the basic difficulties and provide a policy base for future expansion and development.

Before leaving the subject of agriculture entirely, I should like to say a word about the great difficulty which faces the young man who wants to farm but finds today's conditions all but prohibit him from following his chosen calling.

● (9:10 p.m.)

I feel that one of the greatest hurdles to a young farmer in attempting to establish himself is the tremendous difficulty of acquiring and carrying the capital required under modern conditions. The accumulation of adequate farm capital is a very great problem in all parts of Canada. Even if a government or governments jointly provide part or all of the initial investment necessary to establish a modern, mechanized farming operation, the young farmer is handicapped by the heavy annual costs involved and by the uncertainty of returns. He must service his debt, pay income tax, meet the steady rise in the cost of living, and make provision for emergency and necessary annual improvements. In addition, he faces fluctuating prices and uncertain markets. He is at a grave disadvantage in comparison to his counterpart in the urban areas. A young man, in an urban area, must face taxes, the cost of living and other expenses that are perhaps a little higher. But, in most cases, he is drawing his living from a

plant, the capital cost of which, and the annual cost of servicing that capital cost, is borne by someone else. The result is that at year's end the urban young man will be better off by several thousand dollars compared to his rural counterpart.

I think that much closer study must be given to ways of ensuring that those who wish to farm and are capable of adding to Canada's economic development through competent farming, are able to establish themselves in conditions of fairness and justice. Let us not be hasty in writing off agriculture. In Canada, it remains a large and important part of our national economic life and will do so throughout the foreseeable future. I apologize if I appear to have laboured the point of agriculture's problems. But, together with many other Canadians, I am genuinely alarmed and concerned at the lack of appreciation of agriculture's importance to the whole nation and the dangers of not taking immediate action to assist this basic industry. I would urge my colleagues, whose primary concern is with the problems of urban, industrial areas or with other aspects of Canadian life, to give close consideration to the interdependency of all sectors of the economy and of all regions of the country. I urge them to look at agriculture as a major factor affecting all those problems with which they are chiefly concerned.

I would have liked to deal with many other topics today, such as the proposed legislation on prescription drugs, the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, and many other things. I would have liked also to have said something about the implications inherent in branding any society "just" or any other vote getting catch-word, a practice that in my estimation amounts to the equivalent of false advertising. I believe that such sloganeering is misleading and that it does a disservice to Canadians. The men who coin and use such catchy phrases know as well as anyone else that no society yet known to history has been capable of being perfected suddenly and dramatically. Society, and man himself, are not susceptible of overnight change. Yet such a phrase as the just society subtly implies that in the twinkling of an eye everything is to be made the best in the best of all possible worlds. Many people, too many people, can be convinced against their better judgment by such methods. Faced with national conditions as they are, with the fact of human nature, with limited national resources and circumscribed by time, no government can