

*The Address—Mr. Thatcher*

is in fact continuing a do-nothing policy. By further trifling with small-scale experiments and handouts, such as he has announced today he has, knowingly or otherwise, betrayed the desperate hopes of many Canadian families. I suggest that he is today once again trying to pass the buck to the provinces and to the municipalities instead of coming to grips with the problem of housing. I cannot understand the objection of the minister to a public housing project. Surely after four years he should realize that private enterprise cannot by itself adequately cope with this problem. I cannot see why he or the government should hesitate to supplement private enterprise, on a large scale, with state spending if it is necessary.

There is one other quotation which I should like to place on record before I leave this subject. It is the quotation of a statement made in Montreal on August 31 by a national mayors' association, which is as follows:

A national mayors' association Tuesday charged the federal government with failing to live up to its pre-election housing promises and said the minister chiefly responsible was maintaining a "do-nothing" policy.

The powerful federation of mayors and municipalities, composed of mayors and Reeves in most towns or cities, said in a prepared statement that the government should "face facts."

This is not a C.C.F. mayor that is talking, I may say. To continue:

It said Reconstruction Minister Robert Winters, responsible for federal-provincial housing co-ordination and recently returned to Ottawa from a national tour, had established a "do-nothing policy."

Canadians, it said, would be "greatly disappointed if the only result of the recently-concluded trans-Canada 'housing' tour is to be some sort of federal-provincial arrangement to reduce the required down payment for home purchasers."

I say that all the people of Canada will be disappointed at the inadequacy of the solution which the government today offers for this acute housing problem.

There is only one other matter that I should like to mention in this throne speech debate. It has to do with the problem of irrigation in the province of Saskatchewan. I think the fact that the throne speech did not contain one word about that irrigation project should cause concern not only to the west but also to those in the east who have to sell a good deal of their products in the west. As we heard in the debate last night, and as hon. members will now know, in the province of Saskatchewan drought conditions are prevalent in the southwest corner. Once again we are seeing grasshopper plagues and dust-bowl conditions, and I think it is fairly well conceded that the irrigation project which has been proposed would alleviate those conditions. During

the last election campaign the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) once again trotted out his perennial but somewhat moldy promises on irrigation which he has made so often in the past. We heard him speak in many places of the millions of dollars which were going to be spent on irrigation. For instance, speaking at his own nominating convention, according to the *Leader-Post* of April 21 he is reported as follows:

He said Prime Minister St. Laurent is convinced the only way to "bring the west into its own" is to start irrigation projects.

Then the Prime Minister himself came out and, speaking in Saskatoon, said, according to the *Leader-Post*:

Mr. St. Laurent said the drouth of the thirties taught us the absolute necessity of conserving water and restoring and maintaining moisture on the prairies.

He also said that three major conservation projects, including the south Saskatchewan project, were under active study.

One of the chief lieutenants in Saskatchewan of the Minister of Agriculture, who I believe is with the P.F.R.A., just before election time made a statement which was quite significant. I quote from the *Leader-Post* of April 21:

"An intensive survey of engineering and economic aspects of the South Saskatchewan irrigation and power project will begin immediately, L. B. Thomson announced in Regina Wednesday . . . This is an action program."

Where is the action? Why is it not in the speech from the throne? Then the hon. member for Regina City (Mr. McCusker) made a statement regarding irrigation. I should like to welcome the hon. member to this house. I think he will be a real asset to the chamber. Naturally, in a political way, I would have preferred his predecessor. Since that is not possible, I know that the hon. member for Regina City will make a valuable contribution to this house. According to the *Regina Leader-Post*, the hon. member had this to say:

As your elected Liberal member for Regina in a Liberal government at Ottawa, I would use every resource at my command to get immediate action on a new water supply.

I hope to see him get that action pretty soon; I hope the pressure is a little more effective than some of ours has apparently been. Therefore I say, Mr. Speaker, that in the last election speaker after speaker brought in plans for this proposed irrigation, and to dam the south Saskatchewan river. This is not the first time, because in every election in the past twenty-five years the Liberal party has used as one of its main election planks this irrigation project. For instance, here was their 1945 election pledge, carried in a page advertisement in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* of June 9: