

*The Address—Mr. Crouse*

our labour force accept urban employment in preference to working on farms reveals something about our over-all attitudes, priorities and incomes. Canada, and this government, will also have to give a high priority to improving agricultural productivity through research into new agricultural technology and the provision of capital to farmers so that they can use the new technology.

All of the points I have raised, namely, the supply of arable land, the supply of farm labour, the supply of credit or capital, have become problems for Canadian agriculture, because Canadian agriculture has been at a disadvantage in competing for these resources against the financial power of consumerist, urban, industrialized Canada. Before Canada as a whole can change its priorities toward agriculture, it is necessary for urban Canada to realize that the world is facing a first-class crisis in meeting the need for food.

I do not think many Canadians realize this fact. The stark reality of massive food shortages was made evident to me in January of this year when I visited India, where thousands are dying every month because of malnutrition and a lack of food. In Canada we possess so much that we have not felt to the same degree the impact of the energy, food and other commodity problems falling on most of the world.

The potential for higher food production in Atlantic Canada, and especially in Nova Scotia, is higher than at present, but this potential can only be realized if farming is made more attractive to existing farmers and to our young people. If production is increased beyond our own needs, the surplus will always be in demand somewhere in the world, provided we have the necessary infrastructure established in our marketing and distribution system to take care of it. The ocean washes our shores and we are able to use water transport to the markets of the world. There is also the fact that we are next door to the richest consumer market on the globe.

However, for our Canadian farmer to go ahead under present circumstances and plan maximum production would be to invite financial ruin. He could easily find himself with fields of bountiful crops and no place to sell them. This has happened in the past even when demand was high. Foods must be warehoused, protected and processed, and it may be months from the time of harvest to the time of consumption, not to mention the thousands of miles in distance between the producer and consumer. The farmer as an individual cannot provide what is required in either a regular flow of machinery, seed or fertilizer. Neither can he provide the warehousing, processing and transportation facilities required. Let's face it. Due to the risk nature of his industry he cannot be expected to take all the risks when dealing with the corporate world.

I, as a free enterpriser, am generally opposed to government intervention in trade and business. As a general rule, speaking as a Progressive Conservative, I believe this is the correct position to take. However, changing world economic conditions require some changes in our thinking, and I believe there is a role that society or government can play in developing agriculture in Atlantic Canada by providing the security necessary for the industry to flourish. Our over-all market at present is too small to be a good commercial risk in many fields.

[Mr. Crouse.]

Atlantic Canada requires a machinery parts depot large enough to ensure that our farmers can get fast, efficient delivery of what they need. It also requires grain receiving and distribution depots so that supplies of grain can be delivered in sufficient quantity to guarantee a continuity of feed grains. As production is stepped up locally there would be an assured storage place for produce for later use or for sale.

There is also required a fertilizer depot, large enough to hold sufficient quantities and variations to meet demand. There is especially required cold storage and other receiving facilities, so that the food producer can go ahead and produce, knowing that when he takes off his crop it has an assured storage area.

These facilities should all be at tide water, and some of them could well be located in my constituency where we have adequate harbours in Lunenburg, Bridgewater, Liverpool and Shelburne. In fact consideration should be given to establishing these depots outside our city areas which are becoming congested. I believe the establishment of these administrative and physical facilities would encourage the maximum use of farm land in Atlantic Canada, and with world food demand as it is at present there should be little risk of loss on any public investment.

This would appear to be a job for government rather than private industry, for society as a whole can make an investment for production and take a long-term position on recovery of that investment. Industry, on the other hand, must operate on an immediate balance sheet. However, if such a program as I have outlined were adopted, I see no need for conflict with the private sector. It should be possible to work out, with private industry and the farmer, what is required so that maximum food production becomes possible in Atlantic Canada.

Another basic primary industry which is undergoing many hardships today is the fishing industry. Each month the landed number of pounds of mixed fish declines, while the cost of operating the fishing fleet, both inshore and offshore, keeps soaring higher and higher. The problems of the fishing industry received considerable attention during the recent federal election, but since July 8 we have seen very little action by the government in solving our difficulties.

We in Atlantic Canada believe that states bordering the coastal areas where most fish stocks are found must be given the right and the responsibility to manage these stocks in accordance with agreed principles, in the same manner as they already manage the mineral and living resources on the continental shelf. Freedom of fishing as it has been traditionally practised is an approach that is no longer acceptable, and it can be no longer tolerated if we are to avoid the total exhaustion of this most urgently needed resource.

I believe that coastal states must have the right to reserve for themselves that portion of the fisheries stocks under their jurisdiction which they have the capacity to harvest. Only under these conditions can we hope to conserve the world's fisheries, and only in this way can we protect the vital interests of the coastal communities that depend on this resource in Canada.