

*Supply—Interior*

I have here one resolution which I think it might be well to read. It says:

Whereas as a result of continuous droughts for the past six years, which have resulted in crop failures in the districts adjacent to the towns of Lomond, Traverse, Enchant and Retlaw, we, the farmers in this area, have through no fault of our own become practically destitute. We are facing a crisis, where some immediate action must be taken to better our condition, in order that we may eke out an existence and stop the entire depopulation of this portion of the province;

And whereas, through our efforts to maintain our homes, we have individually incurred and are encumbered with a burden of debt which it is impossible for us to carry, which we will never be able to pay, and which is increasing annually;

Now be it therefore resolved, in view of the fact that the government of Canada has invested several hundreds of thousands of dollars in the Canada Land and Irrigation project, that we the farmers of this area respectfully petition the aforesaid government to rationalize this project and as a means of alleviating conditions as they exist here at present, to construct laterals from the main canal to enable us to irrigate at least a portion of our land, in accordance with a survey made some years ago, thereby enabling the people who pioneered here and established homes fifteen years ago to remain.

I was down in that district and I find there is quite a population of these pioneers, many of them men experienced in irrigation work in the United States. Most of the men who remain there are anxious to stay; they do not want to move out; they want to get water; they want to get reasonable terms. They may not be wise; I do not know myself whether the minister has faith in irrigation as a solution of the difficulties in that area, but if he has faith in it I do most earnestly urge upon him to expedite a solution of the difficulties which face these people. They are really in a desperate plight, and if the government is unable to give them any hope for better things in the future then the only thing left to them is to pull out. If they do that they will leave the district with a very large debt—school and municipal taxes, mortgage debts—on their shoulders; the whole scheme will be blown to pieces, irrigation development work in that portion of the province will be set back for many years.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The territory my hon. friend speaks of is not irrigated.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Not yet.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): The people there are asking for a supply of water from the main canal of the Canada Land and Irrigation Company and we have authority to deal with that request. The New West organization, which is a reasonably flourishing project, was organized under provincial auspices. The water is being delivered to them, and we can do the same for other

[Mr. E. J. Garland.]

people. The contractors that I spoke of are those having existing contracts on the Canada Land and Irrigation project. We have power to reduce their contract price, and I am looking into that matter now with a view to making a reduction to encourage and hold these people who are on irrigated lands, and are meeting with a reasonable amount of success. But clearly I do not want to take on a new project until something at least is done with the other. In any case they could organize themselves into an irrigation district and float their bonds as the others have.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): But they have no funds to do anything of this kind with: they are practically bankrupt, every one of them. They are in a desperate state and awaiting relief. Just in connection with that, I received only this morning a letter which I think it is perhaps just as well to give the substance of to the minister at this moment. He may be able to give me an answer at once. It would appear that the Canada Land and Irrigation Company is not yet liquidated, and therefore is still in possession of the works. Now there is a certain bridge, between sections 1-19-22-W4, and sections 35-18-22-W4, which was condemned last year. Nobody has been able to do any work on it, and the Canada Land and Irrigation Company ignore it; they refuse to do anything. The bridge itself is impassable, and yet it is on a most important road, the road that goes from Brooks to High River. In addition, note that it is practically the only road by which the farmers west and south of Milo can get into Milo. I think it would be well if the minister would give out instructions to have this matter looked after at once.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil): I may say that that matter is being taken care of. The engineers have instructions to pick out the more important bridges and repair them first. Unfortunately most of the bridges on this project are out of repair. I was hopeful that we would not need to repair them all, except on the more important highways of traffic. I feel quite confident that the bridge my hon. friend mentions is being taken care of, and I shall be very glad to wire out definite instructions if he will give me the exact location.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I will hand over the letter to the minister. I received it only this morning, so he will recognize that the bridge is a very recent cause of trouble. The farmers in that district will be absolutely unable to take advantage of the new railroad