

The Address—Mr. Gagnon

The paper mills at Port-Alfred, Jonquière, Kenogami, Riverbend, Desbiens and Dolbeau—the last three in the Lake St. John constituency—employ close to 5,000 people, turn out more than 2,200 tons of paper a day and have a yearly payroll of about \$10 million.

In the Saguenay district alone, the aluminum industry, whose Arvida plant is the world's largest, employs more than 6,500 people with a yearly payroll of nearly \$11 million. Returns to contractors, lumbermen and others is almost \$11 million, while the income of medium and small industries, services and trade totals a further \$10 million.

In fact our agricultural industry is the second largest in the province. Farms of the Saguenay district, with a total cultivated area of 327,000 acres and a total value of \$30 million, have a total yield of approximately \$11 million. A promising field, the use of mining by-products, is as yet untouched. It will be seen then, that there is still room in our demesne for a great many new industries.

Some sixty members of the Toronto Stock Exchange, recent visitors in my constituency, were surprised at the abundance of our wealth and amazed at the initiative and success of our businessmen, as well as at the skill and ability of our workers.

Light issues forth from the North, and, as was said in 1867 by Arthur Buies, one of our foremost writers, the North will be the strength and the splendour of our country and the firm and inexpugnable bulwark of the French race in America.

However, to ensure the success of our undertakings, and the stability of the productiveness of our district as well as the physical, moral and spiritual health of our people, we are relying, as do other areas of Canada, upon the co-operation of government authorities, knowing as we do that their chief duty is to look after the welfare of those under their jurisdiction. The first requisite is that workers be guaranteed an income commensurate with the needs of their families, and that they, whether old or young, should be able to derive the full benefit of the pay-cheque they bring back from the factory or elsewhere. With Their Lordships the bishops of my province, I therefore request that income tax exemption be granted on all incomes lower than \$3,000 for married people and \$1,500 for unmarried persons. In view of the fantastic level which the taxes and the cost of living have now reached, the labouring class, now in the grip of inflation, finds it impossible to make both ends meet, and still

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less to put something aside for a rainy day. The social legislation passed by governments during the last few years no doubt have some usefulness but their benefit should not be destroyed by the levying of unduly heavy taxes on those who come under such legislation.

Do not think that you can enrich a man by taking away with the left hand what you gave him with the right hand. Our government has been mortgaging for too long, at the source, the labour and toil of our poor classes. The time has come when this taxing of the very blood of our people must come to an end. When that is done and when, through adequate legislation, the gangsters and profiteers will have been deprived of their means of making excessive profits and exploiting the public, our labouring classes will be in a position to face and overcome all difficulties and to meet the requirements of their daily lives.

As for the farmers, the only reason why, in these times of emergency, they reduce and slaughter their stock is that they can no longer afford to pay their life annuities.

The high increases in the price of middlings and in the cost of other feeds, which followed the repeal of the subsidies and speculation on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange have doomed the dairy and hog-raising industries in the province of Quebec. The same condition applies to poultry. The government must now remedy this condition of its own making, and enable the farmer to gain new confidence in the future. We have had enough of this unplanned governmental interference inspired only by the requirements of certain groups. This state of affairs has only added to the seriousness of present conditions. By their hesitations, their half-measures, their fumbling and opportune policies, the government have wrought confusion and chaos upon our Canadian economy. The people are now worrying about tomorrow, about what will be the ceiling on the goods they have to buy, about what will be the price of bread, milk and butter over the weekend, about what controls are to be removed and what others are to be re-imposed.

In the meantime, the ministers responsible for such a state of confusion are making speeches in different parts of the country, threatening this or that one, repeating their former promises, hesitating upon what course to follow, lending a sympathetic ear to socialists and even adopting their policies while censuring them. They promise to hold enquiries, form committees, and at the same time ignore the findings of earlier enquiries and committees; they do nothing but talk