

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

immediate area but to every Canadian. It should not be necessary to repeat that the economic improvement of any part of Canada is of benefit to every other part of Canada. We are one family in this country. Long ago we asserted the proposition that we shared the responsibility for the maintenance of the people of every part of Canada, and we certainly must recognize that the improvement of production, the improvement of communications or the improvement of the general economy of any part of this country benefits the people of every part of Canada.

In that great area in central Saskatchewan there have been crop failures for many years. Churches have been closed; schools have been closed; families have moved away. At a time when there is a housing shortage, there are empty homes. It is something to challenge the vision, the spirit and initiative of a young and vigorous people. Yet we all know, from the representations which have been presented year after year, and anyone who has had an opportunity of examining similar developments elsewhere can quickly see, that it only needs a positive decision to bring a great area of six hundred thousand or seven hundred thousand acres of prairie farm land into profitable production. This is no longer open to doubt, as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) knows so well, because he has spoken on this subject often and has visited the site. The minister knows also the experiments which have been carried out which have proven beyond any uncertainty that profitable crops can be produced in that area if it is properly irrigated.

On the South Saskatchewan river there are great walls sloping upward at an angle which makes filling, at the point which has been chosen, a comparatively simple engineering operation, huge though the undertaking is. I mention these things because I would hope that in this house the government would find there is a sufficiently strong sentiment in support of immediate action to warrant not waiting until next year to come to a decision. If the government waits until it gets some report next year, then there will be no beginning of this venture until the spring of 1953. This work should be started in the spring of 1952. It should be started, not only for the advantage of the people living in that area and not only so that this large area would be irrigated, but also so that the surrounding area would be improved from an economic point of view. That area could then welcome large numbers of people from outside of Canada and from other parts of Canada as well. It could become a prosperous,

populous and extremely sound area economically which would take its place in the forward march of Canada in these stirring times.

There was no committee needed for the St. Lawrence development involving hundreds of millions of dollars. Yet we are told that we need a committee now to advise the government on the recommendations of past committees concerning a large but simple engineering project which awaits decision by the Canadian government. I am raising this, Mr. Speaker, because I would hope that the members of this house on both sides would indicate to the government that they believe the people of Saskatchewan, who have suffered so greatly from the weather this year, need the encouragement which something of this kind would give; that they may have a decision now so there will be that measure of confidence that would come from the announcement that as soon as the weather makes it possible in the spring of 1952, a real beginning will be made on that great undertaking which I have heard discussed ever since I first visited Saskatchewan as a youngster.

This is a good time to undertake it for several reasons. First, the fact that it would improve a great area of Saskatchewan; second, the fact that it would bring into production a great area of land that could be put to profitable use; third, the fact that it would give heart and spirit to brave people, who have fought on under difficult conditions; fourth, the fact that this is a good time to undertake it when the very difficulties to which I have been referring this year may make people available for work next spring who might otherwise not be available for that type of work which is undertaken in the first year of an undertaking of that kind; fifth, there is the fact that this would be another step in the development of those resources of power across Canada which would take its place in the increasing productive capacity of a country which is now engaged in the common cause of freedom.

I have mentioned irrigation, but over and above the power that would be required for irrigation there would be a large amount of power available for industry, for rural electrification and for the general improvement of conditions throughout a wide area of Saskatchewan. Actually, the amount of power that would be produced by that development would be close to the amount now being used in the whole of Saskatchewan at this time. It would be the core of a great power development which would incorporate all the smaller opportunities for power development in a grid which would embrace a large part