

C.C.F. party or any other party with a nationwide representation, one finds the first question raised is with respect to the farmers and the farming communities in the various parts of Canada.

This is one of the problems the new Parliament must face. No quick solution can be found: it may take a year, or ten years, or no solution may be found at all. But if there is a solution, or the possibility of one, we must find it. No body is better qualified to do that than is the Senate of Canada, for the reason that we here have nothing to gain politically one way or the other.

To a lesser extent, perhaps, a similar situation faces fishermen, miners, lumbermen and labour generally. By and large, the whole scheme of the distribution of the earnings of our country has got to be considered in the light of the position of the various parties in the community.

I do not pretend to tell the Senate that I have a solution to this general problem, because I have not. But I point to the existence of the problem and say that it is not too great for the Senate to attack. I do not claim that every one of us is qualified to say what is best for the farmer, the fisherman, the lumberman, the coal miner or the industrial worker. But I do say that with respect to each of these branches of activity there are in this chamber men and women from every part of Canada who can inform the house and thus help us to form a judgment that is in the best interest of the whole country.

I hope, therefore, that before this Parliament ends—and it may end sooner than one would expect, because it is a divided Parliament—some progress will have been made toward a solution of the problem to which I have referred.

I turn to another matter. I have been asked frequently in Winnipeg, and a few times here, about the prospects of an early general election. I say quite candidly I have no special knowledge or information in that respect. Certainly I have no political interest in it, and neither have my fellow senators. But I am interested to this extent, that an overall majority in the House of Commons is required to carry on effectively the government of this country. Some may accuse me of making an excuse to try to justify an appeal by the present Government to the people in a general election. That is not my intention, and I do not think it is the issue today. I recall in 1921 and 1922 in the Legislature of Manitoba the Government of the day had 26 members, and the combined Opposition parties had 29 members. That Opposition was of course divided, with 12

members in one party, eight or nine in another, and so on, making a total of 29 for four parties. But the day came when the Government was defeated on an issue that had nothing to do with the business of the province. That Government was never able to bring down a firm policy with a long-term view of three, four or five years ahead. It had to operate month by month and introduce what it could justify for the ensuing few months. But in the end, as I say, the Opposition defeated it. You may think that was wrong, but, human nature being what it is, that is what happened.

So I say if we are to have a government that can formulate strong and far-seeing policies in this country we must, inside of the next year, have a general election. What the results may be is in the lap of the gods. But whatever they are, I hope the party which forms a government will have a clear majority in the House of Commons, because that will mean better government for Canada in the meeting of the problems we will undoubtedly face in the years to come. We have a very close relationship with the United States, and we trade with Europe and other countries. Therefore, we in Canada need a stable government which can make agreements and long-term commitments. This can only be done by a government which is sure it has the backing of the majority in the House of Commons.

The other day the honourable senator from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar) said he was not in favour of supplementary estimates. I am sure that opinion is generally shared by all honourable senators. Indeed, I do not think I am in favour of supplementary estimates. However, I do not know how, under our present financial arrangements, we can get away from supplementary estimates. For instance, the Government has on its Order Paper now a resolution dealing with cash advances to the farmers for grain stored on their farms. I do not know what it amounts to, but it is something in the order of \$100 million. That is not an expenditure in the true sense, because presumably it will be repaid. But that \$100 million-odd has to be provided for by way of supplementary estimates, because it was not anticipated when the estimates were brought down. The situation was not known and not expected to be as bad as it is now.

Furthermore, provision has to be made for increased pensions for the aged, blind, physically disabled and war veterans and for increased civil service salaries. Those obligations have to be taken care of now. They are part of the promises that the present Prime Minister made to the people of Canada, and he would be foolish indeed if he