

*Agricultural Conditions*

because the farmers are broke, insolvent, bankrupt, they cannot grow a crop. Then he complains because the farmers cannot get credit on that. That is the amusing part of it.

This country is inhabited, as I said the other day, by the same people who lived in it before—

Mr. BEAUBIEN: Last July.

Mr. BENNETT: —this world depression came. The difficulty is that hon. gentlemen opposite are always smarting under their defeat. It is July with them always. All the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Beaubien) says, apparently, is the one word, July—July—July. That is all he keeps on crying. He has not recovered from it yet.

The hon. member for Lisgar says that the farming population is practically insolvent. He says further that the depression has wiped out all the equity of the farmer.

Mr. VALLANCE: You know it too.

Mr. BENNETT: If I had the pontifical manner of the hon. gentleman I might know it, but there is no evidence of it at the moment. The hon. member for Lisgar, I repeat, says that the equity of the farmer is wiped out. That is a rather serious statement to come from a western farmer. Is it any wonder that you cannot expect the banks to give credit when a representative of the farmers says that their equity is all wiped out?

Mr. VALLANCE: They do not give credit when the farmers say so.

Mr. BENNETT: I know this, that one of the largest banks in Canada has increased its agricultural credits by 16 per cent in the last twelve months, and what is more, during the last six months the banks have been giving credit to all those on the prairies who have been able to show that they had the least hope of the future; but certainly they were not giving credit where the people were doing just what the hon. member for Lisgar has been doing here this afternoon. I ask any hon. member of this house, whoever he may be: Would you ask any banker to lend the savings of the people of Canada on such security as was mentioned this afternoon by the hon. member for Lisgar? Would you do it? Is there one of you who would? Could you do it and be true to your trust? Is it not about time—

Mr. BROWN: We are not blaming them for that. We are simply complaining that the right hon. member is not drawing the proper inference from that fact.

Mr. BENNETT: The right hon. member was not drawing any inference at all. He was endeavouring to point out to this country [Mr. Bennett.]

that in the midst of a great depression it is poor business to magnify your losses and minimize your courage and determination. I shall say more; no greater harm could be done to Canada than to adopt the course being pursued with respect to these very things. When we were in opposition and merely suggested that the matter should be looked into, it was considered pessimism. Now when the actuality is here, to say that you should meet it with courage is the truth. That is what hon. gentlemen say.

Supposing for a moment that the house look at the situation fairly. I am sorry the hon. member for Lisgar did not bring this matter up when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) was here.

Mr. BROWN: We never know when the hon. member will be here.

Mr. BENNETT: He is confined to his bed by illness, and I very much regret he is unable to be here. However, he has a practical knowledge of agriculture. Following his return from the war he went upon the land and made a success of his operations. He had no more capital than that possessed by many gentlemen about whom the hon. member for Lisgar talked this afternoon. Why is it that he had some measure of success?

Mr. FACTOR: Nine years of prosperity brought about by the former administration.

Mr. BENNETT: Well, on that point I will of course take the opinion of the hon. member for Lisgar, who says he is a practical farmer, as against that of a lawyer from Toronto. The hon. member for Lisgar states that conditions during the last few years have been so bad that the farmer never had a chance. He was going to hit the pigs on the head rather than keep them.

I just put this to you—it is one instance, but the country is filled with such instances. The other day I mentioned what I believed to be one of the evils which has in part brought about the conditions which prevail. Shortly after I made that statement, Mr. Priestly, the vice-president of the United Farmers of Alberta, appearing before the Stamp commission in the city of Calgary, used these words:

While on occasions farmers had been borne to the crest of prosperity on the wave of the system—

Speculation.

—they found on looking back that they had spent more time in the "trough of poverty"