

*The Address—Mr. Thomas*

acreage out of the production of surplus commodities such as wheat. Soya bean growers are irked because there is a \$1.20 per bushel tariff against our soya beans going into the United States but United States soya beans enter Canada free. Our producers would welcome some adjustment to decrease this discrepancy.

The program of price supports under the Agricultural Prices Support Act has operated with reasonable satisfaction in our area. While our agricultural producers have argued for higher support prices, they appreciate the caution of the government and the board in setting prices. Our people agree that it is better to start low and make increases where necessary than to start too high and get into trouble with unmanageable surpluses. We subscribe to the theory that the law of supply and demand will ultimately prevail, and that while temporary support prices may be desirable to soften the efforts of sudden and drastic market changes, price supports should not be considered as permanent fixtures in regard to any commodity.

We feel that the best and soundest method of obtaining fair prices for agricultural products is the organization by the farmers themselves of commodity marketing boards and that such boards should accept the responsibility for adjusting production to market requirements.

We welcome the announcement in the speech from the throne that our present farm credit facilities are to be reviewed with the object of making it possible for farmers to obtain financial assistance in modernizing their operations. Improved credit facilities should go a long way in helping farmers out of the present cost-price squeeze by providing for necessary expansion of operation and the installation of labour saving equipment.

Again we wish to urge upon the government the advisability of bringing farm labour under the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Farmers are finding it ever more difficult to get help. People tend to avoid farm jobs because they get no unemployment insurance credits. Farmers are having trouble enough in competing for labour because of high industrial wage rates. They should not be further handicapped by lack of unemployment insurance coverage. We request that the government give further consideration to this matter.

We welcome the statement in the speech from the throne that the humane slaughter bill is to be referred to the agriculture committee. It is our opinion that the agricultural representatives in the house, who are most closely associated with the production and

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care of farm animals, would appreciate most keenly the necessity for promoting humane methods of slaughter.

A matter of immediate concern to our people is the extension of the current rabies epidemic into Middlesex county. Animals in several parts of the county have been diagnosed as rabid and several people have taken anti-rabies treatments. On January 6 the agriculture committee of the Middlesex county council called a meeting of county officials, federal and provincial members of parliament, health officials, conservation officers and others to discuss the situation. A resolution was passed asking that clinics be established to immunize pet animals as a safeguard against the infection of humans. We were informed by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Harkness) by telegram on January 8 that the rabies situation in Middlesex county was being closely watched, that a survey of the county would be made but that present commitments prevented the immediate establishment of inoculation clinics.

A story has been circulating in our area that no more heads of animals are to be sent to the Hull laboratory for examination unless human beings have been exposed. At the same time the story states that until there is more evidence of an increase in the incidence of the disease, clinics will not be established. Our people are wondering how we are to find out whether the disease is increasing when no more heads of animals are to be examined.

I have been informed by departmental officials and by the minister that the intentions of the health of animals branch are very much misunderstood in this regard. In areas such as Middlesex West where the disease has only recently made its appearance the laboratory is examining as many heads as they can get in order to keep track of developments. But in areas such as Grey county and the counties in the northern part of the province where the disease has been established for a considerable time and has probably reached a maximum of intensity, it is a waste of time to continue to examine animal heads unless for a specific purpose such as to determine whether or not a person has been exposed to infection by a rabid animal.

Our health officials favour setting up the clinics at the time when they are most likely to exert the maximum deterrent effect on the spread of the disease. They are watching Middlesex county closely with this fact in mind and as soon as the time is ripe for action clinics will be established.

We have a woollen industry in our constituency. It is not a large industry, but it