

The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker

income tax. And that applies not only to agriculture but to all other phases of national activity as well.

As to the western agricultural association, I want to see established at this session a house committee for the purpose of studying the question of income tax as it affects farmers and labour, so that the entire tax set-up may be revised to make it equitable in the operation and incidence of taxation. Such a committee could hear representations from organized agriculture, as well as from experts in the tax branch and other experts on farm production.

The hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) over the years has been most assiduous in bringing before the house the question of reform in income tax, so as to remedy the unfairness in respect of its application to basic herds. This year a change was made, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) proudly made the announcement. Cattle producers were encouraged by that announcement; but they are today being discouraged by the several interpretations made in various parts of the country by the several income tax collection agencies. The farmers want to know what is being done to preserve and enlarge their markets. They want to know what is being done to prevent the loss of their markets incident to the mistakes of expert planners. They want to know why the United States market is still embargoed against milk and pork products. They want to know what is to be done in connection with the establishment now of stable and adequate floor prices. As the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. McKay) has said, they are asking—

Mr. Gardiner: One of the hon. member's questions answers the other.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am glad to hear my right hon. friend say that, because this is the first time there has been an answer from him on a question which so vitally affects the welfare of Canadian agriculture, and which he brushes aside with such a cavalier answer.

Then, above all, I should like to have from this government, a declaration of its intention to proceed at once with the development of a great irrigation plan for Saskatchewan and on the prairies.

For years the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol) has advocated such a plan. He sold the idea throughout Canada. People everywhere realize that only in the encouragement and development of our natural resources can we hope to achieve that destiny which should be Canada's.

I should like now to pass on to the matter discussed by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson). My right hon. friend the Prime Minister roused himself to a high state of unjudicial dudgeon on Monday in regard to

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some of the statements made by the leader of the opposition. All I would say to him is that as far back as June, 1946, he was warned that if he persisted in departing from the principles enunciated by Cartier, and by every minister of justice through the years, including the late Mr. Lapointe, he would place the constitution of Canada in jeopardy, for it would be in control of a majority in parliament.

The Minister of Justice gave us quite a dissertation on history. He dealt with the period of confederation—and, not having the book before me, I accept his conclusions—

Mr. Garson: Thank you.

Mr. Diefenbaker:—knowing that they are not more than excerpts from the records. He called as witness a gentleman from Tasmania, and another from the United States. As he read what Mr. Maxwell had said I was wondering whether his information came from one of the government information bureaux of the time. Mr. Maxwell's conclusions bear so significant a similarity to some of the statements made by the then Prime Minister that I could only wonder what his source of information was.

However, let us get a little nearer home. I should like to quote one of the provincial premiers, a gentleman who sat in my hon. friend's seat during the years of war as a minister of defence. He set out his position when he spoke here in Ottawa on August 6, 1948—I believe he was followed by the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power)—and he pointed out what we on this side have said, that since the war this government had departed and continued to depart from parliamentary procedure, and that it was infringing and entrenching upon provincial jurisdiction.

I should like to quote what Mr. Macdonald said, for his views are identical in this regard. No one can say that he was a nonpartisan friend of members of this government. Here is the news report of what he said on August 5 when the then Prime Minister sat behind him:

"You have here one great nation," he declared, "in all its affairs and in many other aspects as well. But then within that great nation you have nine other units which have their own rights, their own privileges which they are not going to yield willingly to the central government here at Ottawa."

That is exactly the stand of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew). Canadians are not interested in learned descantations or declamations of what was in the minds of those present or what was discussed at the time of confederation. What they are interested in is that the confederation pact shall be upheld in law, in spirit and in fact, and that