

The Address—Mr. Macdonnell

Mr. Macdonnell: We know that our hon. friends opposite in the far corner of the chamber are socialistically minded. They are quite justified in putting forward their views as they are doing here. I merely wish to point out that the attitude of the present government towards farm problems seems to me to be very sensible. We have not ignored these problems and have been prepared to take special measures. I think of the action taken through the wheat board. We can remember the price support that was placed under butter and various other commodities. All these problems have been dealt with, as far as possible, on their merits and in a practical way. I would think that farmers from coast to coast in this country have a great deal about which to be satisfied.

I must say this proposal made me almost dizzy when I heard of the various calculations that were to be made and the various people that were to be consulted. Quite frankly, this seems to me to be the essence of socialism. It appears to be a negation of freedom.

An hon. Member: It seeks to give counter-vailing power.

Mr. Macdonnell: Those words are used, but the essence of the proposal seems to be to drag on people. The idea this government adheres to is that measures should be designed to help people help themselves. My hon. friends opposite will say the present proposal seeks to accomplish this, but the kind of interference and control this proposal embodies is such that as far as I am concerned it is inconsistent with the aims of the party to which I belong.

The present government is practical. We have dealt with various things which seemed to be in an exceptional position. The wheat board is one of them. But this goes beyond that and, as far as I am concerned, I could not vote for this proposal.

I wish to discuss a subject tonight which is as old as the hills. I believe it continues to be of immense importance. Indeed, in the difficult days in which we are living now I feel it is acquiring a special importance. I refer to relations between labour and capital and particularly to co-partnership with the aim of making the ordinary workman feel he is part of the show, working for himself. I shall have some distinguished witnesses to call, the first being Lord Amory, the present British High Commissioner, who in England was a manufacturer and who has views on the subject. He, by the way, was deputy chairman of what I believe was known as the co-partnership institute.

I also wish to call as witness through his writings Mr. James F. Lincoln of the Lincoln

Electric Company of Cleveland who has written a book which I believe we should all read. It is one of the most stimulating and impressive books I have encountered for a long time.

Third, I wish to call as witness a Canadian manufacturer, Harold Lusk, an ex-president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, a most broad-minded, you might almost say evangelical man, in his approach to his business, but nevertheless a man who pays his wage bills, and pays dividends to his shareholders. In other words, he runs his business in a practical way.

I wish also to say I am merely following in the steps of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming) and the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Hees) when I discuss this subject. Last June the Minister of Finance in talking about what was required to meet the situation used these words:

To secure a maximum increase in employment it is desirable—I should say essential—that every industry, every business and every labour organization should give renewed thought to increase of productivity, the improvement of efficiency, and the competitiveness of costs and prices.

Hon. members might say there is nothing new in that, and perhaps there is not, but I will be coming back to this point and I think I will be able to satisfy hon. members of the house that although there is nothing new in these concepts they have not been put into practice.

I now wish to quote from the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I remind the house that in the world in which we are living today we have fresh competition. Western Europe has been given a flying start by the Marshall plan and it is now competing with us as never before. I shall read an extract from an interesting speech the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Hees) made last November in Toronto when addressing a group of manufacturers. The minister said, among other things:

Western European industries are efficient, and have a high degree of technological skill. They also have lower wage rates than we have in Canada. Most important of all, there exists in western Europe something which we have in all too few cases in Canada—a high degree of co-operation between management and labour, which enables them to work together constantly to improve design and quality, and to lower costs. The result of all these factors is that most of the industries in the common market countries produce products which are equal to or better than ours in quality and design, and sell at lower prices.

I hope that hon. gentlemen have registered that and will ponder the seriousness of that statement with regard to ourselves.

The highly competitive position of western European industries today is the result of hardheaded, practical thinking on the part of both management and labour. They know that unless their product