

*The Address—Mr. Dumas*

and seconder of the address, the hon. member for Nicolet-Yamaska (Mr. Boisvert) and the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Laing), the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) and many other distinguished members have reviewed that legislation, and I only wish to say a few words about two or three items. No doubt you have guessed that I would like to say a few words on the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act. Since His Excellency opened the first session of the 21st parliament many countries, including Canada, have devalued their currencies. The Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Gibson) gave a statement concerning the continuation of aid under that emergency act, in which he said that the legislation would be amended at the end of the calendar year 1949 and would be abandoned at the end of 1950.

I want to point out to hon. members that the mining industry is very important and should not be permitted to decline; that nothing should be left undone to encourage the discovery of new mines. Prospecting has been on the decline for the last three years or so, owing to the fact that the real prospector, the artisan, the man who may discover a new mine, has not been able to go into the field because of lack of funds and also because of a lack of support on the part of the public. We hope that a revival of public interest will provide prospectors with the necessary money to continue their work and find new mines. I do not believe most people realize that base metal mines are found when the prospector is looking for gold mines. We do not know the exact reason for that, but it is a fact, especially in northwestern Quebec and I believe also in northern Ontario, that all the base metal mines have been found by prospectors looking for gold. We have a good example in the Noranda mine, which was found by a prospector looking for gold. Similarly the Waite Amulet mine, the Golden Manitou, and recently the East Sullivan mine, all were found when prospectors were looking for gold. So it is important that we encourage prospecting.

During the last two or three years many mines in process of development have had to close because of increased costs in wages and materials, and also because the price of their final product was too low. Most important of all, but for the aid given under the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act many other producing mines would have been forced to close. Fortunately, however, our government came to their aid.

The bonus given by the government under this emergency legislation may be wrongly interpreted by some hon. members, but I

would like them to understand that this industry is very important in my constituency and those surrounding it. Many cities depend upon the gold mines, as well as many towns and villages, so you will realize the importance of keeping them in operation. I hope they will also realize that some day these mines will be a great asset to the country, because mining has become an integral part of the Canadian economy, on which it has an important stabilizing influence.

Immediately following mention of the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act in the speech from the throne we see, "Prairie Farm Assistance Act." I wish I might also find mention of a clay belt farm assistance act. I would not want to paint the position of our farmers in black, but I would like to explain to the best of my ability the situation that exists in my constituency and in others along the clay belt which extends from Senneterre in Quebec to Hearst in Ontario. In the riding of Villeneuve farming is a relatively new industry, having been established only some twenty-five years ago. Now many of our farmers are at a stage where they need help and guidance! They need help in connection with their livestock, and in connection with the classification, storage and distribution of their products. Studies of these various problems are now being made by local organizations, but it is only with the help of duly qualified technicians and financial aid from the government that a program of such breadth can be carried out. We have the markets. There are over forty thousand people in the cities and towns I have mentioned. Carloads of such commodities as meat, vegetables, dairy products and poultry come from outside the district and are distributed by many merchants in the different localities. In such a situation you would think the local products would find an outlet. I believe hon. members are aware of the fact, however, that a grocer cannot buy products that are not classified. If he is not assured of a steady flow of products from these farmers, he cannot buy from them.

Our farmers need a distribution centre in which they can find facilities such as slaughter houses, cold storage and good management for the distribution of their products. These facilities are lacking, so the flow of products is not steady. This is partly due to a lack of guidance in distribution. Further progress could be made by a livestock improvement program, jointly operated with a program for the development of grasses. This would enable the farmers of the district to continue the production of livestock on a sustained basis. This applies to other areas along the clay belt as well as to the grey wooded soils of western Canada.