

*The Address—Mr. Ricard*

The textile industry is the chief source of employment in my riding. You know, however, that for a decade that industry has experienced slackenings which have been most unfavourable to workers. One plant which could employ 800 workers has only about a hundred people on its payroll at the present time. The lucky ones who can rely on our other textile plants to earn a living for their family are never sure to work a full week. Often, they have to remain idle a few days each week, with consequent serious reduction in their income. Very many families therefore lack the basic necessities for the proper care of children who will make up our nation of tomorrow.

I therefore urge the Conservative government to enact sound and rational legislation to stabilize that industry and raise the employment potential, so that the greatest possible number of Canadian citizens will benefit from our country's prosperity.

Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to draw your attention to the situation of many farmers in my riding. Under the former government, the agricultural market on the federal level was unstable. The price of raw materials and the cost of production have increased each year at a frightful rate while, on the other hand, consumer prices were held at such a level that the farmers have often suffered losses and deficits which threatened their livelihood. Fortunately provincial laws have made it possible for many of them to carry on in their wonderful field of endeavour.

If farmers have put their confidence in me, it is because the Conservative party willingly gave serious consideration to this vital aspect of their economic life. I am confident that this government will find it possible to give these men who constitute the foundation of the economy, all the safeguards they have a right to demand.

I should like at this point to direct the attention of the government to the importance of the services rendered to the farmers by experimental farms. The constituency of St. Hyacinthe-Bagot is situated in the heart of one of the richest farming areas of our province. General farming is practised and breeders of pure-bred stock are among the prizewinners at local, provincial and national fairs. I urge the government to consider seriously the possibilities of improving this technical agricultural service in my constituency. I also urge it to assure sugar-beet producers all the protection they deserve.

[Mr. Ricard.]

Mr. Speaker, the speech delivered by our most gracious and beloved sovereign raised high hopes at every level of our society. Among the measures that will provide welcome relief to my people, I would mention the increase of old age pension, veterans' pensions, holidays with pay for employees of industries under federal jurisdiction, etc. I would like here to draw the attention of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Monteith) to the necessity of increasing family allowances as soon as this government finds it feasible.

Mr. Speaker, in the matter of agriculture, I must say that the farmers were very pleased to learn that the government had decided to ask the members of the house to approve price stabilizing legislation for their products.

The announcement that amendments to certain tax laws would be submitted to the house for approval was welcomed with great enthusiasm by the workers, and particularly by textile workers who were glad to learn that the government had decided to enquire into this field of industry, in order to protect them.

The many letters of appreciation I have received from my constituents prove beyond any doubt that the citizens of my constituency, like those in the rest of Canada, highly appreciate the legislation which our government will seek to introduce.

Here, Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak on behalf of the National and Catholic Syndicate of Building Trades of St. Hyacinthe, which has asked me to urge upon the federal government to undertake or have projects carried out in my district, so that unemployment may be reduced as much as possible during the coming winter months. I realize that even if this government cannot be held responsible for the present situation, it will do all it can to improve the difficult conditions which it had to face in this field, and which are clearly detrimental to the labouring class particularly.

As a practical suggestion, the construction of a retaining wall along the Yamaska river, at St. Joseph, between Barsalou and Bouchard bridges, would provide jobs for many breadwinners. Another project which would provide jobs for workers would be the construction of tunnels under the C.N.R. railway tracks, in the eastern and western parts of St. Hyacinthe. For the last ten years, this