

*The Address—Mr. Larson*

resettlement program is well under way. As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the large grain farm and the large ranch provide the livelihood of a number of our people. In time of war or other national emergency, our sparse population produces a tremendous surplus of food to give life to our fighting forces and hope to whole populations that have lived under the shadow of starvation. The sight of millions of acres of waving grain or luscious ranchland brings to the observer a sense of spaciousness and freedom not possible in any other place. It is a mystery to many how all this wealth can disappear and leave desolation, as happened generally twenty years ago and in some areas during the past few years.

It is all a matter of rainfall. We live continually under the threat that not quite enough rain will fall to mature our crops or support our herds of cattle. It is true that those who were fortunate enough to get heavy gumbo land or pasture land have continued to prosper on the plains with few setbacks. Many were not so fortunate; so you are asked from time to time to vote money for prairie farm assistance and prairie farm rehabilitation, in an endeavour to put everyone on a more or less equitable basis. It is the earnest hope of the Minister of Agriculture, whose policies have done so much, that as the years go on, and irrigation, reclamation and resettlement develop, such expenditures as prairie farm assistance will disappear. Then, the plains can fulfil the hopes that the governments of Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier envisaged when they supported plans to push railroads and settlers into the vast plains country.

It is to be regretted that the very things that make Canada great, far beyond her years, are the barriers to complete understanding and unity of our people. The beauty of our Rocky mountains is unsurpassed by any others in the world. They produce tremendous wealth in minerals, but many people never cross them to know their neighbours on the other side. In the same manner the plains are divided from central Canada by a region tremendously rich in minerals, but many westerners never cross that region to know the people in the east, as we call it. When we think of the maritimes, it is practically a different world.

While these appalling distances tend to divide Canada into virtually several countries, we must realize how much these sparsely inhabited regions contribute to our national wealth, and conscientiously make an effort to overcome the disadvantages. The present government is to be highly commended for its policies which fully recognize

the nationhood of Canada, and stay strictly away from attempts to break Canada into its various components.

I feel that I may be open to criticism for not taking issue with the government on some of the matters of a more contentious nature. I, however, do not believe that localized matters, where there may be some hardship, should be allowed to colour the entire assessment of the general policies.

I express only my own opinion, but I believe a recent event was used as a field of trial for the policies of this federal government. My good friend, the late Paul Prince, M.L.A. for The Battlefords in Saskatchewan, passed on and I feel that there is not too great a tribute I could pay to his memory. His passing precipitated a by-election. It was apparently necessary to hold the election in the middle of a severe winter, making it a real hardship for the farmers to get to the polls. I am reluctant to rehash elections in this house, but the Liberal leader in Saskatchewan, Mr. Tucker, endeavoured to keep the campaign on a provincial basis; others, however, came in criticizing the federal government as to its agricultural marketing policies and as to all the other contentious matters that were discussed in this house last session. We had to defend those policies.

For years the seat has been evenly divided. All factors tended toward putting the federal government on a real trial. You all know the result. In spite of this the people backed up the policies of the federal government. For this reason I feel that I have no real licence to criticize too severely the policies of the federal government.

The trans-Canada highway is a huge undertaking considering the vast distance involved, and the government's determination to complete this project will do much toward unifying Canada. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I hope you will not mind my suggesting to the minister, if he has any control over the matter, that after the highway leaves Swift Current in Saskatchewan it should turn north to a point directly east of the city of Calgary; in that way the thriving city of Saskatoon would be put within easy reach of its facilities.

It is the duty of every Canadian to support his government in its endeavour to more solidly unify this vast and wonderful country. I appeal to everyone to learn all he can about other parts of Canada, even though he cannot visit them; to understand the problems which face his neighbours one or two thousand miles away; to understand their racial or religious culture and to appreciate their economic successes and difficulties.

I note with great satisfaction the gradual disappearance of the term "fight for the east"