

*The Address—Mr. Stephenson*

The whole paper is more or less filled with the achievements of the farmers of Durham county at the royal winter fair in Toronto. I have given these quotations to show that I represent a truly agricultural district.

I should like to make a few remarks now on agriculture in general. In saying that agriculture is a basic industry of the country, I believe that to be so because our great country was built upon it. We know that our forefathers depended on this basic industry for their very livelihood, and the great advance Canada has made is due to their efforts. As I said, they also depended on agriculture for their very existence. That is true today, but people living in urban and metropolitan areas give very little thought to this fact. They assume the attitude that agricultural products just grow on the shelves of the grocery stores, that all they have to do is to go into the store and pick them off the shelves, and the shelves will be restocked from some storage plant. These people give little thought to the long hours and the hard work that the farmers have put in to place these products on the shelves of the grocery or butcher stores.

I think the farmers should be commended for their great war effort. It has been said that an army marches on its stomach, which is true. If it had not been for the effort of the farmers there might have been a very different ending to the last war. At the time farmers were making this great effort to produce the necessary products of the farm, industry was offering higher wages than the farmers could pay their help. As a result of the attraction of high wages in industry, farm labourers left the farms and went to the urban and metropolitan centres. The farmers' sons did the same thing. The result was that pop and mom and the little children were left to carry on as best they could to try to satisfy the great need for farm produce. They worked twelve hours a day before they lost their farm help, but afterwards it was necessary for them to work fourteen and fifteen hours a day.

Nothing was done by the government to see that farmers were given assistance to secure labour, although every other industry seemed to receive some consideration. As a result the farmers found they had to purchase special machinery in order to maintain production, and they purchased tractors, combines, and so forth, at considerable expense. They made a gallant effort. A great many of their products had to be sold at controlled prices, something that I do not think we should forget. I hope the farmers who borrowed money to buy machinery now have it paid for, because the outlook at the

present time does not appear any too bright for the future of agriculture.

We now find the government going back years and digging out taxes from these people who worked so hard, but who were allowed nothing extra for their long hours of labour and the work performed by the wife and the children on the farm. They were not given one cent's consideration by way of reduction of income tax for the extra services they performed. The department is now trying to dig out the odd dollar from these people, who gave such great service to their country. It is even going to the extent of asking whether the farmer's wife may have an extra bill shoved down her stocking. When they go to see if the farmer may have an extra nickel hidden away some place, they are demanding it of the farmer in spite of the fact that this government boasts of a surplus of over \$600 million.

On an expanding market we always find that the products of agriculture are generally the last to increase in price. We also find on a receding market that they are the first to feel the effect of any change. That is what is happening today. On the Toronto market last fall beef sold for \$28 to \$30, and the price now is from \$18 to \$20. I have a letter from one of my constituents who is in the beef cattle business. He says that at the present time he stands to lose \$2,500. We see that chickens have gone down 14 cents a pound. Eggs were selling for 70 to 75 cents a dozen a while ago, and just the other week I bought grade A eggs for 44 cents a dozen. We find that potatoes are now selling at \$1 to \$1.25 a bag. This is the reward of the farmers after the great effort they made on behalf of Canada, and I would say that in great part it is due to the bungling of the government.

**Mr. Grant:** That is a broad statement.

**Mr. Rowe:** Broad but it is true.

**Mr. Graydon:** It is not a narrow one either.

**Mr. Stephenson:** The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) made a political speech the other night. I am sure it is not the kind of speech that the farmers have been waiting for. He took great credit for the expanding trade Canada had enjoyed since 1935, when the Liberal party came into power. He said it was all due to the Liberal party.

**Mr. Gardiner:** And in spite of the Tory party.

**Mr. Stephenson:** The minister has made his statement. Let us see what happened. What is the true reason that we had expanding markets practically from the time that the