

*The Address—Mr. P. T. Asselin*

States. My county also has some important industries, such as the Canadian Johns-Manville Company in Asbestos, which operates the world's largest open pit mine, the Jeffrey mine; two large paper mills, one owned by the Domtar Company and the other called Richmond Pulp and Paper. There is also the Dominion Lime Company, and several other important companies.

[*Translation*]

One of the problems in my riding is that of unemployment resulting from the lack of diversified industries.

The situation has slightly improved recently, but some of my constituents are looking for other secondary industries to help solve the problem.

[*Text*]

Being a farmer from Quebec, I am well aware of the problems facing the eastern farmer today. Canadian farms have become relatively more efficient as far as production is concerned, but unfortunately markets have not kept the same pace. There is a need for closer contact between the farmer and the Department of Agriculture. This is a rapidly changing world, and farms cannot operate economically using outmoded techniques. There is a need for sound, practical farming education.

[*Translation*]

At the end of the last century, the eastern townships were renowned as an agricultural area not only in Canada, but also internationally, when beef breeding was their main production.

All this has changed a lot since that time and today, while there still is some beef breeding, the milk industry has become the very foundation of our agricultural economy.

Our farms are becoming industrialized, often too rapidly for a great many farmers unable, financially speaking, to keep pace with this development. This causes problems that must be solved.

[*Text*]

In looking over the figures of the last census in 1961, in the section "Classified farms by economic class" I found the following facts. Of the approximately 480,000 farms in Canada, 46 per cent have a gross revenue of \$2,500 or less per year. In eastern Canada we find that 40 per cent of the farmers in Ontario, 58 per cent of the farmers in Quebec and 70 per cent of those in the maritimes are in this category.

[*Translation*]

So, in eastern Canada, you have a farm population where about 50 per cent of the people have a gross annual income of less than \$2,500.

That means that 50 per cent of those farmers have to depend on that pitiful amount to operate their farms, raise their families, pay their bills and send their children to school. Such is the situation in my riding as well as elsewhere in eastern Canada.

Generally speaking, the farms back home are among the best in Canada. Unfortunately, there are also too many marginal ones.

[*Text*]

In the budget papers presented in connection with the budget of 1962-63, the estimated spending of the Department of Agriculture was \$289.3 million. I should like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that of this amount \$172.1 million was for the prairies only and the remainder for the whole of Canada was \$117.2 million, prairies included. In other words, 60 per cent of the budget went to the prairies only and 40 per cent was left for all Canada, with the prairies again taking its share of that 40 per cent.

[*Translation*]

It is obvious that the western farmers also have their problems which are worthy of attention, and if the eastern farmers ask to be taken care of, they do not intend to deprive other areas of our country of anything but simply to get their fair share.

Canada is a vast land, the second largest in the world. Its agriculture is diversified. Therefore, in a country, it is the responsibility of the minister of agriculture to give leadership in farming to develop policies and introduce legislation, not only to assist the farmers but to stir up the general economy of the country. There is a great deal to be done in this vast land of ours, with a population of less than 19 million people, and we can ill afford to keep 50 per cent of our agriculture in a marginal situation.

Another very important role is to give leadership, instructions and the required direction. One single minister can hardly maintain contact, in such a large territory, with all farmers and solve all their problems.

The former minister of agriculture (Mr. Hamilton) himself deplored the fact that he did not pay enough attention to the problems of eastern Canada.

The hon. member for Iles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Sauve), who is now Minister of Forestry and soon will be, I hope, minister of rural development, is a well-known economist. He has the required know-how to undertake the economic studies which are needed.