

*Agricultural Conditions*

Mr. BENNETT: So it was; why be so inaccurate about these things?

Mr. McKENZIE (Assiniboia): I would like to quote a few expressions of opinion by others than members of parliament, who have expressed their views with regard to the actual conditions existing in western Canada. I have here an address delivered in Winnipeg on December 9, by Premier Bracken of Manitoba, in which he stated:

Times in Canada are worse than they would otherwise have been, because of the extreme nature of the Bennett policies.

Then with regard to the tariff, he said:

All past tariffs, initiated by federal governments have tended to restrict international trade. In this respect Mr. Bennett's plan is more extreme than any of the policies of the past few years. It is an axiom that when a tariff is put on goods it increases the price to consumers. It is equally true that a tariff which restricts trade works to the disadvantage of the farmer, who is dependent, as western Canada now is, upon foreign nations for a market.

That to my mind is the crux of the whole situation. We are endeavouring to make the government realize that what western Canada needs more than any other single thing is markets for its products. We cannot get those markets by restrictive trade measures and tariff increases. We cannot sell to other countries unless we are willing to buy from them, and that is one thing, more than any other, that we want to impress upon this government.

I have here what appears to be a memorandum got out by the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan section, in December last and sent to the right hon. the Prime Minister. This memorandum is signed by G. H. Williams, president of the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section Limited, who states that he is the head of an organization having over 30,000 direct members. I will quote one or two clauses just to show what his opinion is as the head of that organization. He says:

The conditions of the farmers of the west are nothing short of deplorable, and these conditions, unless rectified, sir, are bound to be reflected first by corresponding distress among urban dwellers of these prairies, and latterly, in the city dwellers of eastern Canada.

There is an erroneous impression that portions of the province are in a fairly safe and secure position because they have had very few crop failures in past years. This, sir, is wrong.

Then he continues:

These are the conditions, sir, and you and your supporters pledged themselves to give equalization of opportunity to the people of Canada, and—"farmers are people."

[Mr. McKenzie.]

In an endeavour to protect the manufacturing interests of Canada, you have imposed certain tariffs. These tariffs, rather than lowering the prices of the goods the farmer has to purchase, have in some instances caused a raise in price. Now the government of Canada has some responsibility to its primary industry—agriculture.

Hon. members opposite, especially those coming from city constituencies, have endeavoured to show that there has been no increase in the price of agricultural implements since the increase in the tariff. Whether or not that is true I am not prepared to say, as I have not gone into the matter, but when I was home during the Easter vacation an implement dealer told me that while there had been no increase in the price of agricultural implements there had been an increase in the price of certain repair parts. That statement is borne out by a letter which appeared in the Farmers' Sun of Toronto, of April 23. This letter is signed by Mr. Harold Currie of Strathroy, and would seem to demonstrate that the same applies to Ontario. It reads in part:

Last week the writer got a practical demonstration of Mr. Bennett's "humbug" when he went to the machinery agent to get some needed cultivator repairs. The teeth that were last year 90 cents are now one dollar; the bill hook for the binder, last year \$1.50, is this year \$1.65. The increase in price applies only to the parts for which there is the greatest demand.

During the special session the right hon. the Prime Minister told us that he had received guarantees from the manufacturers that there would be no increase in the price of their product to the farmers. It will make very little difference to the farmers of the west whether or not the prices of implements are raised this year, but it will make a very material difference if an increase is made in the price of repairs and repair parts. If the price of repair parts has increased 10 per cent that will affect the farmer; it is those repair parts that he needs this year, because he will not be buying new machinery. I would like to know whether the Prime Minister will look into that question and see whether or not the manufacturing concerns are increasing the price of the repair parts that the farmers are most likely to need.

With regard to conditions in the west, the other day, just the day after the people of my constituency had an opportunity of reading the lecture that was delivered to us by the Prime Minister a week ago to-day, I received this telegram from the overseer of one of the important villages of my constituency. He states:

Less than 20 per cent of the farmers of this district have paid their last year's indebted-