

as to every item as was promised. I should like to know the point at which the hon. gentleman thinks that protection to rubber tires approaches the right figure? Why bother so much with boots and shoes when in these days of Liberal government the people are walking so seldom and riding so much in automobiles?

Mr. ARTHUR L. BEAUBIEN (Provencher): In rising to take part in this debate, it is not my intention to again consider many phases of this vast question, most of which have already been discussed. I want to limit my remarks to one or two points on which, in my estimation, not sufficient light seems to have yet been thrown.

The budget does not seem to bring very substantial changes in our tariff situation, but no matter how short the step in the right direction may be, I believe it should be accepted. I readily admit that all desirable changes cannot be made in one day or even one year. It is only by seeing the good results of slight changes in the tariff that the people will press their demand for more alterations in our fiscal policy. When I say the people, I do not mean the agricultural class only. As you know, Mr. Speaker, it has been said that we favour class legislation. Of course, this statement comes from an advertisers-controlled press and from bawling politicians who work first and last for power, and who have misrepresented, by hook and by crook, the Progressive group and their ideals. When I speak of the people who will demand changes, I mean all elements of our population, except, perhaps, the get-rich-quick and the reaper of excessive profits in exploiting others' brains and labour.

The progressive group stands for justice to all classes, for the progress and welfare of the whole population. We have been accused of asking special privileges for the agricultural class. Nothing is further from the truth. If we have asked that justice be given to the farmers and that they be afforded an opportunity to reap all advantages from their work, it is because we feel that other classes of society could not logically reap the full benefit of their activities unless the farming class, which is the basis of public welfare, receives fair play and justice.

The fact that farming is the very foundation of national life was demonstrated a long time ago. Cicero in old Roman times, proclaimed that: Among the productive arts, none was better than agriculture, none was more fruitful; none was more agreeable or more distinctive of a free man.

[Mr. Putnam.]

One of the foremost economists, if not the greatest of the last century, Le Play, has expressed the same idea in a beautiful passage which I will quote in French first, and which I will try to translate afterwards. He said:

*L'agriculture a été pour les sociétés humaines le principal moyen de multiplication, d'indépendance et le progrès moral. Plus que toute autre branche d'activité, elle caractérise la vie nationale. Elle est, dans l'ordre matériel et dans le régime du travail, la force qui complète le mieux l'ordre de la création.*

The English translation reads:

Agriculture has afforded to human societies the principal means of expansion, of independence and of moral progress. More than any other branch of activity, it characterizes the national life. It is, in the material order and in the regime of labour, the power which best completes the order of creation.

It being admitted that agriculture is the basis of our national welfare, let us glance at the world's conditions to-day. People have just emerged from the stupor resulting from the most horrible war of all times. They are all trying to devise means, according to their conditions and power, to effect a recuperation of their former strength. In other words, everywhere the world is facing the problem of reconstruction. In all countries public men are busy building up a new national life. Since the beginning of the session, you have heard speeches on national unity, national problems, and national reconstruction. How is it to be brought about? Will you build from the roof down or from the foundation up?

I do not hesitate to say: If you want to build up a prosperous nation, in this agricultural country, start at the foundation. Try firstly to better the farming life. The farmers are ready to share the sacrifices in this present crisis; they never shirked their duty on co-operating with other classes in order to make this country prosperous. They are still ready to toil on the land to extract from it most of our necessities of life, provided you instil in their hearts hope instead of discouragement, contentment in place of dissatisfaction, and so create in their homes a little happiness. If you adopt means to improve the disastrous condition the farmer is in to-day, the unemployed of the cities will go to the land, instead of emigrating to the United States, and those who would under other conditions, desert their farms will never think of leaving them. Immigrants coming within our borders will become good settlers and will trade with other industries which will again enjoy the sunny side of prosperity. I repeat in all sincerity, if you want to reconstruct our national life, start at the basis, the farmer.

In the February Bulletin of Agricultural Statistics, it is stated that: