

The Address—Mr. Boutin

If we want to save the eastern farmer from unavoidable bankruptcy, the central government will have to grant him the same benefits that are granted the western farmer. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hays) will have to stop regarding our farming industry as a negligible quantity, and set a sensible support price for the sale of pork, eggs, etc.; the federal government should appropriate a greater part of its annual budget to agriculture.

In the 1963-64 estimates, which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon) submitted to the house last May, we find—somewhat regretfully—that only 2.7 per cent of the total budget concerns agriculture, whereas that same budget awards 25.6 per cent to national defence, for the purchase of Bomarc's, which are already obsolete, to pay the salaries of the very people who allow themselves to be robbed of their arms in broad daylight. That department has received the lion's share, though we are in peacetime. If we examine this budget further, we notice that the seventh largest item is the servicing of the debt, which absorbs 13.5 percent thereof to pay Canada's liabilities incurred owing to the mismanagement of our successive governments in Canada.

Expressed in figures, we see that agriculture received \$172,221,150, in comparison to \$1,500 million and over for national defence, and over \$800 million to pay the bankers who have been exploiting the Canadian people, in collusion with our successive governments since confederation.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time the government awoke to a situation which becomes more and more untenable every day and even catastrophic for farming in eastern Canada.

In its 1962-63 report, the Catholic farmer's union also stated:

But since those who, apart from the farmer, can and must contribute to the solution of the problem do not seem to realize its acuteness and seriousness, it is becoming urgent to take step to open their eyes and urge them to act. The following statistics speak clearly, eloquently and even bluntly: the Quebec farmer's lot, which has been far from being enviable for quite a long time, is getting worse every year, if not every day.

The farmer is ready to do his share in order to improve his lot. He uses more and more modern methods and techniques in the operation of his farm. He cannot reasonably play his part and efficiently carry out his task in the marketing of his products, which becomes more and more important and complex.

There, Mr. Speaker, you have the present situation of the farmers in the province of Quebec and in the eastern provinces. In fact, the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and the maritimes are precisely the ones with the smallest profit increase last year.

We hope that the new minister of rural development will take steps to start farming

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moving again in eastern Canada, so it can get out of its present slump.

We had hoped the appointment of a minister of agriculture for eastern Canada, promised by the Prime Minister during the electoral campaign, would considerably help our agriculture. As this project fell through, and served only as a lure to get the vote of the Quebec population during the 1963 electoral campaign, I hope the department of rural development will not experience the same fate and will get results before it is wound up. The farmers in the province of Quebec have for too long been neglected by the federal government. It is time this government did something to bring them out of the distress in which they presently find themselves.

Before resuming my seat, I want to express the hope that the present government, as the United States government has just done, will reduce taxes materially in order to give more purchasing power to our Canadian consumers. We hope the government will follow that policy, since it is wont to follow the United States in everything they do. You may be assured, Mr. Speaker, everybody would be happy over such an action, particularly those who presently bow under the too heavy burden of taxes of all kinds.

[Text]

Mr. Patrick Tobin Asselin (Richmond-Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. member for Longueuil and the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard on the excellent speeches they made in this house last week when they moved and seconded the adoption of the speech from the throne. They fulfilled their duties with assurance and competence. May I also congratulate the hon. member for Laurier and the hon. member for St. Denis on their election victories earlier this month and wish them a long and fruitful stay in parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to comment particularly on one aspect of the speech from the throne, namely agriculture and rural development, but first I want to say a few words about my county of Richmond-Wolfe which is in the province of Quebec. I represent the same county that elected my grandfather, Hon. Senator E. W. Tobin to this house 64 years ago. He represented it with devotion and distinction for eight consecutive terms and, needless to say, he was elected under the Liberal banner. They say I am following in his footsteps. I hope so, for at least the next 30 consecutive years. Richmond-Wolfe, basically an agricultural county is situated in the heart of the eastern townships and the beauty of these townships is known throughout Canada and the United