

The Address—Mr. Gardiner

questions, as to why I became the promoter of it at that early date. Being the promoter of it, I would not care to stand up in the house and say that, because I am absolutely convinced the project is a good one, it ought to be proceeded with. I was convinced before we started that we ought to find something that would be absolutely satisfactory. I have been trying to find it for the past sixteen years, and personally I am satisfied it has been found. But I am quite sure that every member of this house would agree that when it comes to proposing to spend \$68 million out of the treasury of Canada we should at least ask three men who are experts to examine the records upon which I have based my opinion, and upon which others have based theirs, and to say whether or not they agree with it.

I have the feeling in the bottom of my heart that after they have made their examination they will agree, but nevertheless that again is the opinion of one who is promoting the scheme and not one who might be critical of it.

Mr. Coldwell: When may we expect the report of the commission?

Mr. Gardiner: They are three practical men, as everyone will agree. Dr. Hogg is the chairman; Mr. Gaherty has been very prominent in power matters throughout Canada for a number of years; and Dr. Widtsoe is well known in the United States as an outstanding irrigation engineer. These three men have been reading the reports. In a clipping from the press that was handed to me tonight I see that they have already arranged to be in Regina on the 22nd of November to discuss the question with the government of Saskatchewan, P.F.R.A. officials and others. I am unable to say when they will be ready to make their report, nor would I care to say that they ought to make it at an earlier date than they themselves determine will be possible in order to obtain whatever information they need to make a finding. But I am as hopeful and desirous as anyone in this house that the date be a very early one.

I am sure that the members of the government agree with me in that view, and there will be nothing done to delay the report so far as the government is concerned. I hope as a result of their investigation we will get a report which is satisfactory, and that we will be able to proceed; but at the moment I cannot say anything more than that. I hope that the leader of the opposition will accept my statement when I say that the government is just as anxious as he and others in the west that it will be possible to construct a project

[Mr. Gardiner.]

in the central part of the province of Saskatchewan, which will bear comparison with the irrigation project that has been developed in the southern part of Alberta. Whether or not the South Saskatchewan project is found to be feasible, whatever the decision of the commission is with regard to it, we will still have proposals to make in connection with the Red Deer project in the province of Alberta, but we think this project should be cleared off the records before we start considering a third large project.

The other question raised with which I wish to deal is the crop condition in the west. I am quite prepared to accept the proposition which was made before dinner by the leader of the opposition to the effect that the Minister of Agriculture should take some interest in this matter. I do not think that he was suggesting that I had not been doing so, but I am quite sure that he was suggesting that if I had been doing so the house ought to know something about it. Therefore I decided that immediately he sat down I should say something to the house with regard to this matter. The leader of the opposition referred to the fact that we have been experiencing crop difficulties in western Canada over a long period of time. May I suggest that in that long period of time we have spent at least fifty years trying to produce a wheat which would ripen in ten days less time than the old red fife with which we started. We finally succeeded in producing the Marquis variety. I say "we" but the experimental farms under the Department of Agriculture had more to do with the experimental work than perhaps any others. They were associated with our university staffs and others.

Eventually we developed Marquis wheat. We had the assistance of individual farmers here and there who were carrying on cross breedings of wheat with other plants in some cases in order to get a wheat which would ripen at an earlier date. I am going to suggest at the beginning of what I have to say tonight that, while we accomplished the task which was given to us as a department of agriculture, I am glad that the practices we are following with respect to the seeding of crops and harvesting have done away with much of the time saved by the experiments carried on with regard to wheat varieties. In other words, I am afraid that the late seedings of the last two years have not been altogether due to the weather. They have been partly due to the kind of equipment that we are using now.

It is true that when you get a large tractor and equipment out on the field and get them moving you can do a lot more in twenty-four hours by that means than you could in any