

The Address—Mr. Blair

to high-grade dairy animals. With the improvement in breeding and the development of high-grade registered stock, it seems that these animals become more susceptible to the disease and show a lack of resistance. If we are to continue to develop high-grade stock, particularly for our dairy farmers, it will be necessary to give every assistance to breeders and owners in checking the ravages of these diseases.

In the month of January the farmers of Lanark county held a protest meeting in the town of Perth. This meeting was well attended by representative farmers of all the various branches of agriculture common to the district. They were deeply concerned over the falling prices of bacon, eggs, and dairy products, as well as the situation in our overseas markets. These farmers were an unusually fine group of people, and in all fairness I must say their requests were most reasonable. They recognized that agriculture is Canada's basic industry. When agriculture is prosperous, the rest of Canada is prosperous. They were not asking for high and unwarranted prices for their agricultural products, but only for a price which would return to them a reasonable profit. This group realized that if the farmers had to buy goods at a higher price level than that set for the products of their farm, it would mean not only a reduction in buying power for them but a general loss of agricultural prosperity. They are aware of the fact that lower prices for agricultural products mean increased unemployment and reduced buying power for those products which are already becoming surplus on the market. They were asking only for a balanced economy and parity prices.

The resolutions passed at that meeting contained requests that agricultural prices be supported in keeping with the price of manufactured goods. One resolution contained the suggestion that it was necessary to receive 42 cents a dozen for eggs in order to cover the cost of production today and called on the government to establish a floor price of 42 cents. The meeting also passed resolutions asking for a bacon floor price of 36 cents per pound for grade A Wiltshire sides at the seaboard, and a price of 30 cents per pound f.o.b. factory for Cheddar cheese.

I have stressed the importance of cheese to the county of Lanark, and I again point out that it is essential that we maintain our traditional market for Cheddar cheese in Britain. It is essential that the farmer receive a price sufficient to compensate him for his labour and investment.

With regard to the question of egg and pork production, the meeting felt that these producers were in the same position as the cheese producers. The cheese industry and hog raising have, in the past, been coupled together. Whey, as a by-product of cheese, has a food value for hogs which helps to cut down feeding costs. It is estimated that whey has a feeding value of one-tenth the value of hog feeding concentrates, which cost as high as \$80 per ton. I may say that there is an export market for whey from certain parts of eastern Ontario. It is shipped to the United States and is used in the manufacture of penicillin.

There has been a great deal of misunderstanding about the agricultural situation among people who are not conversant with conditions. While we are proud of our industrial advancement and growth, we must remember that agriculture is the basic industry of Canada. It is an industry in which the farmers are not limited to a certain number of hours per day or per week, but is one of constant occupation. Not only is it an occupation of long hours and arduous toil, but any successful farmer must make investments in machinery and in the general upkeep of his farm.

I have stated that, because of the diseases which affect livestock, this branch of farming has now become a somewhat hazardous occupation from a financial point of view. During the war farmers were encouraged to increase production in every way. When controls were introduced, it was generally felt that the prices of agricultural commodities had not reached the level of other commodities in Canada. Farmers were advised to increase production. It was not easy to obtain farm labour at that period. Industry was geared to a high pitch in the production of war materials, and wages were generally on a high scale.

In return for higher production, the government of Canada promised the farmer that, following the war, adequate prices for farm products would be maintained. One clause in the Agricultural Prices Support Act, 1944, reads in part:

... shall endeavour to ensure adequate and stable returns for agriculture . . . and shall endeavour to secure a fair relationship between the returns from agriculture and those from other occupations.

It will be recalled that the former prime minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, made an announcement regarding floor prices for farm products. In a national broadcast on December 4, 1943, Mr. King said:

I wish tonight to thank the farmers of Canada for their magnificent contribution to the battle of production. I wish as well to appeal to them to