

*The Address—Mr. Balcom*

that a number of civil servants who have been employed, since 1919 and 1924, in the department of pensions and national health and soldier settlement board of Canada were granted permanency. But later these permanent certificates of employment were withdrawn, and again later reinstated. But the delay in reinstatement penalized these same employees from benefiting under part II of the superannuation act.

Under this superannuation act, the amount of an employee's superannuation is based on the annual average salary received by him during his last ten years of service. The act covering employees in the public service of Canada should, in fairness to these men who have worked faithfully and well, serving with the veterans of two world wars, be amended in order to give the benefit of superannuation, calculated on the average annual salary received by them during their last five years of service. We hope that all members will agree with this proposal and give it their support so that the minister may show justification for action he may consider taking.

And while speaking of the benefits to the Canadian people, I would like to see the five-day week, which has already been granted to the administrative staffs of the civil service, extended to those employees of the civil service excluded from the original order. I do not believe that you can make flesh of one and fish of another.

If one may judge by the statement of the parliamentary assistant to the Postmaster General, they are doing this in the Post Office Department and I should like to see it in other services.

Since we have a Minister of National Health and Welfare who is so conscious of the needs of the blind, the sick and the disabled, it was more or less expected that he would propose further legislation for assistance to totally disabled persons. I had hoped though that the federal authority would pay the full shot in this case, and thus relieve the provinces—particularly was I thinking of the maritime provinces—from this burden. We should remember that some of the provinces, including Nova Scotia, are carrying as heavy a load as it is possible for them to finance.

We have received information in the house this week that the cash income of the prairie farmers from the Canadian wheat board for wheat, oats and barley for the calendar year 1953 will be around \$1,104 million—the highest cash income ever enjoyed by the farmers of western Canada.

[Mr. Balcom.]

To support this statement I should like to read from the *Daily Bulletin* of Wednesday, November 18, put out by the dominion bureau of statistics:

All regions had increased sales in the nine-month period—

That is retail sales.

—but for September moderate declines were recorded in the Atlantic provinces, Alberta and British Columbia. Saskatchewan had the largest percentage increase over last year both in the nine-month period and September, the former rising 9.5 per cent and the latter 9.7 per cent;

What a healthy state that is for anyone to be in!

Since the opening of the house, and it is a repetition of other years, we have heard of practically nothing but wheat and the alleged precarious position of the wheat farmer.

I wish the fishermen and coal miners in Nova Scotia were in the happy position of the western farmer. One thing that amazes me is that with such a glut of wheat on Canadian and world markets the price does not come down as it would if any other commodity were in surplus supply to the present needs of the people. With the price of wheat down it would be expected to be reflected in the price of bread to the public.

Were the market glutted with fish, even to the extent of one or two shiploads, the price would immediately react to the producer, the fisherman and the latter might not be able to sell his products. Not only that, he might have to take it out and dump it, but not as the western farmer dumps his wheat and then goes back in the spring and picks it up undamaged and receives a good price for it. No, the fisherman would sustain a total loss. The fisherman has a most perishable commodity to market. There are no cold storage plants at our doors as the farmers have elevators all over the country. I want to say that I have great sympathy for the farmers because I know they work very hard, but they do have these facilities which are not available to the fisherman.

When it comes to price there is no comparison in the basic production prices. Wheat prices have been at the dollar level while fish prices have been away down in the penny class. You can understand what I mean when I say that a fisherman has to sell 18 herring to buy a loaf of bread, 120 herring to buy a pound of coffee, and 175 herring to buy a pound of twine. If the inshore fisherman who relies on fishing for a living were to be so ambitious as to aspire to the ownership of an automobile, St. Peter would have to be in the boat with him, at least in spirit, so he could catch enough fish to accumulate the wealth required to purchase it. You can