

*The Address—Mr. Peters*

province of Quebec, including his riding. I think it affects the producers in the agricultural industry all across Canada. I refer to the problem of the lack of markets and marketing facilities, which includes supervising, grading and inspection.

We could probably produce enough potatoes in Timiskaming to supply the needs of southern Ontario as well as our own area, but because governments have not yet been interested in establishing grading stations and providing the capital necessary for co-operative enterprises to develop marketing, grading, packaging and the other forms of development that are necessary to put a uniform and well graded, well inspected potato on the table, we have not been able to induce enough people to come into the area and produce this commodity.

This becomes a real problem. Do you get all the producers into the area and produce the potatoes, with no market for them, and then establish the grading stations and facilities for packing these products; or do you develop a product, get a brand name for an area or region and then, when you have the trading and co-operative facilities for handling and storage, go about establishing markets for those products?

In northern Ontario we have other problems that may exist in other parts of eastern Canada. We are plagued with a high freight rate. I wish to refer to one specific item, that grain can be shipped from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to North Bay at 80 cents per 100 pounds. On our own railway, if it is shipped from North Bay to New Liskeard, the freight rate is 31 cents per hundred pounds. Therefore we have problems in connection with high freight costs which we have not been able to solve. There have also been problems in connection with the high cost of fertilizers, machinery, and particularly the high cost of rural living. This is perhaps the greatest problem that rural agriculture faces today. I refer to the price that is charged against land in the form of taxation in order to cover rural roads, rural education, rural communities. In particular, the municipalities which have been spreading into the townships, where rural taxation has to cover many facilities, are not able to carry these costs. This has placed a burden on the farmer and on the rural taxpayer, a burden that has not been asked of any other segment of the Canadian economy.

As the years go by, there is an increasing desire to supply those living in a rural economy with what are considered in the city to be the necessities of life. We desire to raise the standard of living of the people and the standard of housing and facilities,

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and I believe it is impossible for the municipal tax structure to be continued at the present basis.

While it is true that farmers in my area do not receive some of the benefits of farmers in other parts of the country, I believe that something has been done by this government, and something has been done by provincial governments to assist in this problem. We have heard very little objection to the acreage payments being made to farmers in western Canada. We have heard, of course—and we agree with this statement—that these payments should be made on an annual basis, because the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) says these are payments that are being made to establish in Canada a true price system for wheat. If this is true, I suggest that these payments should be made on an annual basis and they should be made regularly, because if a true price system is desirable one year, it is desirable each and every year.

Many of the other subsidies which have been given to agriculture in other parts of the country have not been made available to the farmers in eastern Canada. I refer in particular to my area and such schemes as disaster assistance, money that would be paid in the event of disaster. In most cases, when this kind of assistance is asked for, because the area is small, the regions are separated and the disaster is of a localized nature, it is very difficult to get any type of assistance for farmers who may suffer on this account.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard of the drought in western Canada and we sympathize with these farmers. I believe we should demand that this government give immediate attention to this immediate problem and do something for the farmers of western Canada who are plagued by drought, and where the indication is that the situation will be worse, not better, next year. This assistance in the main has been of a very short term nature. In the last few years we have experienced only one major program of the Conservative government to develop something for agriculture on a long range basis. We have supported this program. I have heard many Conservative members rise and say that A.R.D.A. has been an exceptional achievement of this government and that it will do a great deal of good. We supported A.R.D.A. We believe that this program will do some good on a long range basis, but for goodness sake let us not make it too long; let us get cracking on it. If