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We have reached the fifth session of this parliament and the fourth year in which the present administration have held office, and up to the present apparently all the government has been able to do for agriculture is contained in the following:

You will be invited to consider legislation designed to facilitate the efficient and profitable marketing of live stock and agricultural products.

Why, if it is to be of any value at all, was not legislation of that kind introduced two or three years ago? Why have we had to wait until what may possibly be the last session of this parliament before being told we shall be invited to consider such legislation? I say the government has not done for agriculture a thing worthy of mention. Of course I shall wait until the legislation here mentioned is introduced before commenting upon its value.

During last summer, in the course of a visit to western Canada, I spent considerable time gathering first hand information with respect to agricultural conditions in the rural sections and smaller urban centres, not in the cities. I saw at first hand the conditions prevailing with respect to agriculture throughout the west, and, as a result of that visit, came to appreciate more than would have been possible in any other way the very serious plight in which the people of that part of our dominion find themselves. I doubt if it is possible to exaggerate the extremely difficult conditions under which people in certain of the agricultural areas in western Canada are labouring. One point which was definitely impressed upon my mind in the course of my journey was that, instead of lifting the burden of agriculture, this government has placed an additional burden on the backs of the agriculturists. By the increase of tariffs it has added to their burden to a shocking degree. The cost of living to this great portion of our population, which is bearing the burden of hard times to a degree greater than that borne by any other class, has been greatly increased. The cost of their clothing, boots and shoes, housing material, farm implements and the like, in fact the cost of everything which enters into production, has been increased.

An hon. MEMBER: And sugar.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, sugar, and many another necessity of life, costs very much more, and this at a time when the farmers through low prices and crop failures are having the most bitter struggle in

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

all their experience. A sound policy for agriculture in Canada should be directed to cheapening the processes of production to the greatest possible degree to enable the Canadian farmers to compete successfully in the markets in which they must sell their products. On the other hand, nothing has been accomplished by way of securing better and wider markets. As a matter of fact, it has been made more difficult to get into the markets of the world because of retaliatory measures taken by other nations against the high tariffs of this country. The policies of the present administration have been a real factor in destroying our markets. I say, Mr. Speaker, that the seriousness of the plight of western agriculture cannot be exaggerated, and the government, if it wishes to help agriculture at all, will very speedily have to change the tariffs that are in force in this country at the present time.

In one of the reports which the Prime Minister laid on the table, there is reference to a discussion with delegates from other parts of the empire, and the statement is made that trade has improved within the empire through the lowering of the tariff which was agreed upon at the Ottawa conference. Well, if it be true that for what little improvement there may be in empire trade, according to the statement of those who claim that there is improved trade, we are indebted to a lowering of the tariff, why could we not improve the trade of Canada as a whole by lowering the tariff all round? Why can we not thus relieve the burden upon agriculture, a burden being borne by those who have been suffering most of all from present conditions?

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, that I observed throughout the west was this: no matter whether or not a man was solvent, if he happened to be a farmer it was almost impossible for him to obtain money anywhere at a reasonable rate of interest; in fact in some cases it was impossible to obtain money at all. Certainly a demand that one felt was paramount throughout western Canada was more reasonable rates of interest, and something in the nature of agricultural short term and intermediate credits. I should have thought that the government would have been fully apprised of that situation long ago, but all we have in the speech from the throne with reference to the relief that is to be given in that direction is that the government has been discussing with the governments of the different provinces this question of agricultural credits, and that something will be done