

Canadian people may know the truth. Before such committees ministers could appear and be subject to questioning. Progress reports in the form of speeches in the house by ministers are not good enough. You can never elicit the naked facts in that manner. Only the time-proven method of cross-examination by question and answer will suffice. The process should be free from anything in the nature of propaganda. The public has been fed that until it is nauseated. Let us face the facts—not by the methods of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation but by the methods of the round table.

The government may hold the view that it is not in the public interest that the facts and figures for which I am asking be disclosed. I know the matter is not free from difficulties. When I make the proposal I visualize many of its implications, but I am convinced that the method I have suggested is the only real way in which the government may satisfy the public. I am willing with some of my colleagues to meet with the Prime Minister and some of his colleagues so that we may consider the whole proposal, in an honest effort to arrive at a conclusion.

The other point to which I wish to refer is the plight of agriculture in Canada. From observations I have made and from reports which have reached me I know that agriculture in Canada is in a serious condition. How is the farmer of New Brunswick to live on 50 cents a barrel for his potatoes, when the production cost is nearly a dollar? Help is being given to the wheat farmer—and properly so—and to the apple farmer. What about the farmer in New Brunswick? In Canada we have nearly a million farmers. Approximately one-half of our population is directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture for its daily bread. The farmer is not and for a long time has not been receiving a just, fair and reasonable return for his products. Instead of improving his position, as was anticipated by most people—and I must confess I was among the number who thought his position would be improved—the war has actually accentuated his distress. To say that until we have a prosperous and contented agricultural population in Canada we can have no happiness is merely to repeat a truism.

It is a matter of profound regret to me, and I am sure it will be to the agricultural population of Canada, that no action of any sort is even indicated in the proposals set out in the speech from the throne. This condition cannot continue, and I desire to bring home to the government the seriousness of the situation and to ask that this omission be given immediate attention. With that end in view

I propose to move an amendment to the resolution under consideration. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Yale (Mr. Stirling):

That the following be added to the address to His Excellency:

"We respectfully submit to Your Excellency that this house regrets that the government has continued to soothe the Canadian people regarding the war effort of the nation, thereby creating a false sense of security when a clear-cut call to action is desperately needed.

"And this house further regrets that despite the serious condition of agriculture no effective action is proposed to alleviate that condition and to ensure to the Canadian farmer a just, fair and reasonable return for his products."

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should like to join with the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) in the congratulations he has extended to the mover (Mr. Claxton) and the seconder (Mr. Jutras) of the address to His Excellency in reply to His Excellency's speech from the throne. May I also thank my hon. friend for the tribute he paid to the talents of the hon. members who moved and seconded the address in reply.

Speaking at the opening session of this parliament I remarked that I believed Canada was particularly fortunate in the fact that a large percentage of members elected for the first time to seats in parliament had given so much of time and thought to a study not only of Canadian but of international problems. I pointed out that not only was that a fortunate condition for the hon. members themselves, but one particularly fortunate for parliament. If we needed a demonstration of the truth of that statement I am sure we received it in the excellent speeches made on Friday last.

The hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Claxton) comes to us with an established reputation. The high position he has attained at the bar of his own province was known to many of us. We knew, too, the extent to which he had given serious thought and study to social, industrial and international problems. Therefore we expected that, when he addressed the house, we would hear a speech which would evidence thoughtful consideration of the great problems confronting the world to-day. We had reason to believe that the hon. member would be statesmanlike in his utterances. We were not disappointed. The speech delivered on Friday last by the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George revealed how fully he appreciated the magnitude of present-day problems and that he had gone deeply into the causes which