

*The Address—Mr. A. R. Smith*

the shaping of world affairs and will continue to work toward the objective of everlasting peace. I agree that the best way of achieving this is through the tools of the Colombo plan, and otherwise through economic preparedness or economic persuasion or military preparedness. I believe that our participation in the United Nations is essential, in spite of the severe constitutional limitations of that fine organization.

I believe that this parliament will certainly welcome the government's intention of improving the lot of our senior citizens and of course the recipients of war veterans allowances. These fixed income groups, I suggest, are the real victims of our inflated economy. The diminishing value of our dollar has affected all of us, but far more severely has it affected those whose income is now almost entirely depleted. It is therefore, I believe, essential that one of the first considerations of this or any government should, in recognition of services past rendered be directed to those who have made this present prosperity so general for us.

As an Albertan I am naturally happy to learn that the government intends to provide a stimulant for our farm economy and that measures will be taken to greatly stabilize our agricultural products.

In assessing farm income there appears to be only one real question of debate and that is the question of urgency. I would suggest that if you examine one province, as an example Alberta, you will recognize that this urgency is indeed very real. I think that this can best be reflected by the number of bankruptcies which have occurred amongst our country merchants. I do not care whether he be a bulk oil salesman or a general store merchant, the fact of the matter is that many of the individuals who are so much a part of our integrated farm economy have had their credit extended to such a point that in many instances they are no longer able to carry on business, except of course on a cash basis. I believe that this is the real barometer by which to determine the state of the shortage of cash income in Canadian farming communities.

There will be, I suggest, a great many members in this house who have served either on municipal councils or in provincial legislatures, as it has been my privilege to do, and I am certain they will join with me in welcoming the announcement of the government's intention to call together the provinces for a dominion-provincial conference. There can be no question in our minds that many of the problems which heretofore have existed can, to some extent, be resolved through such a meeting.

I would like to suggest, and I do so in all seriousness that at some future meeting consideration be given to inviting Canada's municipalities to join in such a discussion. As an example, the Canadian federation of mayors and municipalities could in my view make some contribution to a meeting of this nature because I believe that, after all, many of the definitions of inter-related responsibilities between the three levels of government were written nearly ninety years ago and in this modern economy have now to some extent become outmoded. I think it is a regrettable factor, and those who have served on municipal councils will agree, that many of our municipalities are looked upon as the poor relations in Canada's federation of governments. I believe that this group could make a useful contribution in assisting in the redefining of the division of taxation policies and municipal services and I would hope that this could be done in the not too far distant future.

There is a 13-word announcement in the speech from the throne which says little but which has broad implications. It has been referred to already in this house today; I refer to the proposed changes in the taxation structure which will be submitted for our approval. It is of course obvious that these changes cannot be announced in detail at this time, but speaking for my own constituents I hope that after provision has been made for the primary needs of individuals the taxation authorities will also give consideration to providing incentive relief or incentive encouragement to Canada's developing industries.

More specifically, I believe the Canadian independent oil producers have asked that they should be given the same encouragement for the development of our oil and gas resources as the United States government provides for United States companies which are in competition with our companies in Canada.

Finally, I congratulate the government on its proposal to initiate a national development program. If Canada is to enjoy national unity there can be no question in this house but that we should all participate equally in the national prosperity. Towards this end I believe the economic development of the Atlantic provinces, the construction of the South Saskatchewan river dam and the Columbia river project are all sound investments which will strengthen the Canadian economy immeasurably.

While on this subject may I suggest to the government that a national development policy might well at some future time include a stock-taking of Canada's natural resources. It is not purely by accident that