

The Address—Mr. H. O. White

But now the government says: We will hand the problem back to them and see what they can do with it.

This is a serious problem. I do not want you to think that I am dealing with it lightly. The United States is facing a problem with regard to floor prices; and from articles appearing in the press it appears that the officials of the Department of Agriculture here are going to set a floor price, but the indications are that the price is going to be low. It is going to be a bargain basement price, I am afraid; and that was not what the farmers had in mind in 1945 or again in 1949 when the Agricultural Prices Support Act was dangled before them prior to the election. But now they are told that the situation has changed; the officials point to the United States with their accumulation of potatoes and other products and so they are saying: We cannot set this floor too high or we are going to get into difficulties, so we will put in a bargain basement floor.

As long as I can remember I have heard tariffs talked of. Some have said that a floor price for farmers is a subsidy. If tariffs are not a subsidy, I do not know what they are. I believe that farmers and others are quite prepared to do away with subsidies if all the rest of our economy is prepared to do the same thing. I think possibly it would be better for all of us if we gave some serious consideration to that matter because it is, no doubt, one of the things that are stagnating trade.

I have here a resolution passed at the last annual meeting of the Middlesex County Federation of Agriculture, and I should just like to read it:

Whereas the future market outlook for farm products is uncertain; and

Whereas farmers in this country produced and sold farm products during the war years below world market prices; and

Whereas promises have been repeatedly made that farmers would be sustained by satisfactory floor prices;

Be it therefore resolved that proper measures be taken to implement the provisions of the Agricultural Prices Support Act whenever the need arises.

This resolution was carried unanimously at that meeting.

For a moment or two I want to deal with the proposal in the speech from the throne to set up a committee to look into the national health plan, along with old age pensions and other things. This is going to take some time, and it looks to me as if it was a delaying action. If we examine these national health proposals, we shall find that they were first put forward as a policy of the Liberal party in 1919, and they have been brought out at the correct time practically ever since. In one of the throne speeches mention was made

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of the house committee on prices. We received three copies of it, it is true; but that is all that was ever done. It had the effect of drawing people's attention from the government's shortsighted policy to the troubles they were in; and in this way got the government out of the hole at the time. Nothing was ever done. That is about what is going to happen with this national health program. It has one purpose only, to attract attention and delay action.

Mention was made of the cold war. I just want to refer back again to the fact that if we are to fight an effective cold war we must have a healthy economy not only in Canada but in all the rest of the signatory nations to the Atlantic pact.

People are quite prepared to pay heavy taxes to maintain and strengthen our defences; but they also feel that there is very little to show for the \$400 million that was spent on national defence last year.

In the speech from the throne we find the following:

The measure to consolidate existing legislation respecting our defence forces . . . will be re-introduced.

I have made some reference to that, and reference was made to it in the two previous speeches. During the recess I heard more criticism back home of the Department of National Defence than I had heard in any of the past four or five years. I was asked such questions as these: What are you doing with the \$400 million? What have you to show for it? We have one aircraft carrier that we are not able to keep in operation all the time. We have very few of the jet aircraft that we were taken to Rockcliffe to see some years ago. We have few of them today. A veil of secrecy has been cast over that \$400 million of the people's money. Our people are worried about national defence. I should also like to refer to the fact that all the various branches of the service have a dental corps. One dental corps should be able to take care of the teeth of all the men that we have in the forces.

We need a realistic approach to the world's needs. We hear of people needing food. We know that there is a serious dislocation of distribution. We need a convertible currency, not a controlled currency, in the western community of nations. We cannot be strong militarily if we are weak economically. I think the whole thing can be summarized in what is taking place at the royal mint. They are making a new silver dollar. On the old silver dollar the good ship *Matthew* appeared, commemorating the entry of Newfoundland into confederation. On the new dollar they are taking to the canoe.