

The Address—Mr. Larson

policy. In the second war Germany built a huge reserve of planes which were far ahead of their time, but as we developed our aviation we outdistanced them in quality and numbers. The matter of carrying a force to be ready always to withstand the shock of an attack by the aggressor and carry the attack to him is beyond the ability of a nation like Canada. But we can be thankful that our powerful partners, Britain and particularly the United States, have an industrial and economic strength to fill this vital role.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us examine for a moment our domestic affairs forecast in the speech from the throne. If employment is kept at a high level and agricultural prices are good we have the basis for a sound internal economy.

Let us turn for a moment to the position of labour. During the war employment and wages were at an extremely high level. This winter there has been a good deal of talk of excessive unemployment. I believe that a good deal of this difficulty has come through the extremely cold and stormy winter that we have had west of the great lakes. Also the war drew many men from agriculture into industry. There is talk of unemployment in the larger centres but I find farmers having a hard time to get good men to do farm work. I also know that many farm buildings and homes in small centres are going unpainted because of lack of men to do the job. Carpenters, plumbers and men in all such trades are difficult to get in the smaller centres.

I am glad to hear that a measure will be brought before parliament to extend the benefits of unemployment insurance. However, I feel that a move of a good deal of labour from the cities to the smaller centres would add security to those individuals and greatly minimize the hardship they may suffer.

In the history of the industrial revolution are many instances of management exploiting labour, and the trade union movement was forced on labour. The result of this movement has been that people who sell their skills have reached the position where they can now walk in the same dignity and the same pride as the richest men in the country. This adds immeasurably to the unification of the nation, because there is nothing quite so disrupting as a large dissatisfied group within a nation. I must sound a warning here: trade unions are becoming so powerful that they can disrupt the whole economy if they choose to do so, as evidenced by the coal strike in the United States.

I feel that the leaders of these great movements would do invaluable service to the country if they realized that, through their

[Mr. Larson.]

efforts, they had put labour on an equal footing with anyone in the country, and that there is no longer a struggle for equity. Their position should now be that of statesmen with the welfare of the entire nation their responsibility. I find it hard to believe that the coal strike in the middle of winter, bringing with it such hardship, was necessary to the welfare of the miners.

In the matter of public health, so vital to the nation, measures are being introduced for the further benefit of all. I strongly urge that, with the greatest possible dispatch, the matter of old age and other pensions be incorporated into an over-all social security scheme.

Veterans' legislation is to be expanded. As a veteran myself, I feel that the treatment of world war II veterans will stand as a monument to the fair-mindedness of the Canadian people in accepting the increased taxes necessary to carry out those great veteran rehabilitation plans.

I do not wish to bore you, Mr. Speaker, by endeavouring to go into every single detail of His Excellency's most gracious speech. I feel that, to the best of my ability, I have covered, in all phases, most of the principles involved, with the exception of agriculture.

I should like to conclude by speaking briefly on this subject. The entire Canadian economy is perhaps affected more by the economic position of our farmers than by any other single class of people. The downward adjustment in prices of agricultural products, which was not unexpected, has been cushioned by government support, to take up seasonal surpluses. This has the effect of giving adequate prices to the producer when his crops come on the market, and protects the consumer in the cities against prohibitive prices when products are out of season. He can still buy them, rather than leave them on the shelves of a merchant's store.

With reference to wheat, which is our major agricultural export commodity, different methods must be used. We have had a large portion of our wheat under contract direct to Britain. In some ways this method is good, but the idea of a world food pool, out of which importing countries can draw, is probably a more equitable way of distributing food to the world.

It should be noted that, even at the price of \$2 a bushel, wheat is still the cheapest food people can eat; but at whatever level this commodity is traded, I can safely say that what the wheat producers desire most is an orderly, steady market for a large portion of our crop. I do not believe that agriculture, organized or unorganized, will ever be satisfied with an uncontrolled open market. We have developed a good market for our cattle