

*The Address—Mr. Low*

political and economic systems and our standards of morality lag far behind, to the great disservice of humankind the world over. Our country, and the world today, is faced with the greatest challenge of all times. We are challenged to work out new ideas—and they must be new—and new techniques to guide the free part of the world through what I conceive as an era of unparalleled expansion and development, which I think could be realized all over the world if we could only achieve a real change of heart, get down to business and solve first the problem of distribution and then the problem of war. Solving the first—that is the problem of distribution—certainly would contribute to a great extent to the solution of the second, which is war.

I am not suggesting that we should suddenly begin giving billions to the Colombo plan, but surely we must appear ridiculous and parsimonious to the world when we grudgingly increase our contribution by a million dollars a year. India herself can use much more than she is getting through the plan; and there is some reason, it seems to me, for urgency in bringing more help to India's teeming millions through the Colombo plan and the Point Four program. Russia sees the immense advantage of making an offer of substantial economic assistance to India—or at least promising it—because recently she promised or offered to build a steel plant for that country with a capacity of a million tons a year. That sort of thing is something which arouses the imagination of the people of India.

My reason, Mr. Speaker, for taking as much time as I have on this matter tonight is the hope that the government will re-examine its proposals and bring in provision for an increase of more than a paltry million dollars over last year's contribution. Such an increase would demonstrate our thankfulness to a provident Creator and demonstrate the kind of love for our fellow men that Christian nations should be demonstrating in times like these. It would demonstrate our political sagacity in a world of conflicting ideological manoeuvres and would demonstrate our economic good sense, because the contributions we might make would reflect themselves in increased economic activity and employment in our own country.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about the agricultural situation in Canada. The speech from the throne painted a rosy picture of general conditions in Canada. It says nothing, however, about the real condition of agriculture. I would like to point out that the farmers of Canada have just passed through a most difficult year, not only because of the low yield of wheat in

the west but because of the weather conditions. Harvesting weather was poor in many places. Not only that; they are still caught firmly in the price-cost squeeze. That price-cost squeeze has been getting worse continually since 1951. The spread between the prices obtained by the farmers for their products and the cost of production is today the widest it has been for many, many years. There seems to be every prospect, too, that it may widen even more. The price of cattle and hogs is not expected to improve at all this year. Experts I have heard speak just recently suggest that those prices probably will decline to some extent.

Everybody knows that 1951 was a good year for the farmers, for in that year price and cost levels were about the same. But immediately after 1951 there was a strong downward movement of farm prices, while costs of production have remained almost exactly the same as they were in 1951. Retail prices of food have not followed the downward trend of farm prices, which leads a great many uninformed people to blame the farmers for the high retail prices of many food items.

It is claimed that with the recent wheat movements into Europe, and with the generally reduced yields in western Canada, the wheat outlook is somewhat improved. But it is mighty hard to convince the farmers—the farmer, for instance, who has not yet been able to deliver even his first quota—that the situation has improved.

Something was said about cheese. Two and a half million pounds of cheese are coming into Canada from New Zealand. Just yesterday I heard one of the agricultural experts of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture state that the reason given by officials for allowing that cheese to come into Canada was to assist New Zealand to balance or come near to balancing an unbalanced trade with Canada. Now, if that is the case—I am not saying it is, but I heard it yesterday afternoon over television—then one can justifiably say that what we are trying to do is make the cheese producers, the milk producers of Canada, subsidize the industrial production of Canada for export to another land. That subsidization business has been done before. The farmers have been asked on occasion to subsidize the whole of the Canadian people, to bear the whole cost of cheap bread, and they certainly subsidized the people of Britain under the British wheat agreement. This subsidization business piled on the shoulders of the farmers of Canada has gone just too far in many instances.

The farmers of Canada today are operating under quite a number of serious handicaps