

*The Address—Mr. Coldwell*

Laurent) indicated in his remarks today, of being able to sell our surplus commodities in one area and buy most of the supplies that we needed in another area. Two world wars have changed this picture. That is the basis of what we are apt to call the dollar problem. Some people say that henceforth we must sell more in the United States in order to obtain dollars to pay for imports from that country, and we should do this if we can. Unfortunately the main commodities upon which our farmers and certain other primary producers depend are competitive with the same commodities in the United States. The figures the Prime Minister used this afternoon confirm that it is upon agriculture and other primary products that the majority of our people on the land, in rural towns and villages, in the distributing centres, and indeed in the industrial cities, depend. The lack of markets for these commodities will be reflected in general depression and unemployment everywhere in Canada. Already there is genuine alarm at accumulating surpluses due to shrinking markets for primary products, and of course the rising number of unemployed. The two things are related.

What do we suggest should be done to offset the difficulties that are arising? First, of course, steps must be taken by parliament to maintain and increase domestic consumption by planning for full employment and widely distributed purchasing power. Our best market is still our domestic market. At present we are told we have some 375,000 persons unemployed and seeking work. Yet what is the government offering to relieve this situation? An extension of unemployment insurance is the solution mentioned in the speech from the throne. That is a palliative. I agree it is a necessary one under certain circumstances, but surely in this country it is a confession of failure when there is so much to be done. Tonight we learned what has become of the public works shelf of which we heard so much in 1945, and which was recommended in the white paper dealing with post-war employment plans which I believe was placed before the house in that year. If we are to achieve full employment I say first that this country cannot possibly allow primary products to fall drastically in price. Consequently farm purchasing power will require the establishment of adequate floor prices based on parity with the goods farmers must buy. I submit that is of immediate concern not only to the government, but also to this parliament, and this parliament must grapple with it.

I imagine whatever we do now will be in the nature of expedients to meet a threatening crisis. Expedients are what we have usually adopted throughout the years. In the light of

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a completely new world situation what we need and must have is a properly planned and comprehensive farm policy for this country, something we have never had. Such a policy should be formulated in conjunction with a national economic plan for the development of all our resources having in view the maintenance of full employment and improved standards of living for Canadians generally. I do not suppose that will be undertaken immediately, since agriculture may be faced with increasing difficulties at once. But at least an outline of a comprehensive plan for agriculture should be formulated. That should be the subject of a conference of representatives of farm organizations, provincial governments and the federal authorities. Therefore we urge that, while taking short-term steps to relieve the situation now, Canada should be formulating a long-term policy for this basic industry. Because the government failed to take effective steps to protect agriculture from the severe dislocation with which it is threatened, or to meet rising unemployment, I had intended to move an amendment in simple terms condemning the government for its failure in these two particulars. The official opposition has moved an amendment; but because some of the phraseology and some of the statements are not altogether acceptable to my colleagues and myself I am going to move an amendment to the amendment, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis), as follows:

That the amendment be amended by deleting from subparagraph (2) thereof all the words after the word "inaugurate" and substituting instead thereof the words "an over-all social security program including national health insurance and the removal of the means test from the old age pension"; and also by inserting in subparagraph (4) thereof, immediately after the word "measures," the words "to protect civil liberties and at the same time," and also by inserting, in the same subparagraph, immediately after the word "communists," the words "and fascists."

Standing by itself that is rather incomprehensible, so I shall read the amendment as it will appear if the subamendment is adopted:

We respectfully submit to Your Excellency that Your Excellency's advisers have:

(1) failed to take adequate measures to preserve and expand markets for Canada's surplus products of farm, forest, sea and mine, and to deal with the problems of increasing unemployment and reduced income to Canadian farmers and other producers; and

(2) failed to take steps to inaugurate an over-all social security program including national health insurance and the removal of the means test from the old age pension; and

(3) deliberately violated a law of this parliament by illegally suppressing the report of the commissioner under the Combines Investigation Act on the flour mill industry for ten months, including the period of the recent general election campaign, and denied to parliament information essential to the performance of its duty and the maintenance of responsible government; and