

*The Address—Mr. Fair*

have their own currencies, but we have consistently refused to take their currencies in exchange for our goods. But we find that the United States has again taken the lead and recently sold some \$20 million worth of its surplus agricultural products to Great Britain in exchange for their currency. I think it is about time that we should wake up and get down to realities.

I do not think that I should deal at greater length with the question of wheat at this time. Other occasions will arise later in the session to discuss this matter and I will have more to say about it. I was gratified to hear the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) make his statement today. We want the truth. When we have that rather than newspaper reports of figures provided by some disgruntled party, then we will be able to deal intelligently with questions that arise and with which we should deal.

I was glad to hear the minister say that he is in favour of the wheat board, because I know that some years ago the right hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce was not in favour of the wheat board. Being a hard-headed businessman I knew that sooner or later the light would dawn upon him and he would realize that the wheat board is the best thing for the farmers and the country as a whole.

The question of tariffs, I believe, should be attacked realistically. On my way down here to attend the session I picked up a copy of the *Winnipeg Tribune*. One of the first things I ran across, after turning over the first page or two, was the matter of the shadow cabinet of the Progressive Conservative party. Immediately below that I found, in spite of the opposition that was shown here two years ago to legislation preventing manufacturers from setting prices on their products, the following:

\$150 allowance for your old ice-box or refrigerator regardless of condition.

Then they give the price of the new refrigerator as \$449 or, with the trade-in, \$299. That is clear evidence to me that these products are still priced far too high. We can see that if we go across the line as the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Stuart) has done on different occasions. I hope he makes a speech again because I know he will give us some of the prices that are in effect on the south side of the line. He knows because he lives right beside the boundary between Canada and the United States. We find that articles manufactured by the same company sell for almost twice as much in Canada as they do in the United States, as a result of the tariff protection they receive. However, in this house and outside we hear complaints

against those who are trying to get support prices for agriculture. Labour people are protected because they have regulations requiring so many hours a week, so many days per week, guaranteed pay and that sort of thing. I think the farmers must ask that many of these injustices be removed without further delay.

Tariffs are a millstone on the backs of many of the people of this country and, to a particularly large extent, on the backs of our farmers. In my own home town I bought a small strip of celluloid to put on the top of the windshield of my car to take the place of a sun visor. I never did like sun visors and I like them less since I bought this little piece of celluloid. It cost me \$2.75 in my own home town. After the election was over my wife and I went on a little trip to visit friends in Minneapolis where I bought exactly the same thing at a filling station for \$1.04. Now, what is the reason for a price spread like that? The boundary is an imaginary line and the price difference results from gifts given to manufacturers and others by the government that is in office at the present time. I think now the combines legislation should be made use of, and that many of these people should be brought to time.

In the *Winnipeg Tribune* of November 3 I found a note which shows that the price of farm produce in the United States has dropped 11.5 per cent during the past year. The dateline is Washington:

Prices of farm products dropped 2.34 per cent between mid-September and mid-October, tightening still further what the agriculture department calls the "cost-price squeeze" on United States farmers.

It was the largest monthly decline reported by the department since the Eisenhower administration took office last January. It was also the largest since last December when, in the fading days of the Truman administration they declined 2.89 per cent from the mid-November level. The general trend of farm prices had been downward for the last two years.

Prices received by farmers in mid-October, 1953, the department said, were down about 11.5 per cent from a year ago and about 20 per cent from the record high reached in February, 1951.

Again dealing with agriculture, let me cite a statement by Sir Horace Plunkett, noted organizer of farm producers' co-operatives:

Destroy your cities and in a year they will be rebuilt; but destroy your agriculture and grass will grow on the streets of your cities within a year.

When you have grass growing on the streets of your cities then I think you will have trouble all over the country. Communism, which has been spoken of so many times during the past years, will again have a wide open field for its operations. Apparently the government of the United States is not