

We are to-day in one of the great periods of human history. Revolutionary changes are in the making throughout the world. In America we have been spared the suffering and pain so widespread in Europe and in Asia. I am glad to voice approval of those references in the speech from the throne which foreshadow increased economic aid to suffering peoples by Canada. Indeed, these are the only constructive proposals in a speech so barren and unrealistic in other particulars.

I would add, too, that the appeal made by the Prime Minister last evening for Canadians to restrict their own consumption of food-stuffs needed by starving peoples, meets with our wholehearted support. I wish he could have gone further, and prohibited the wasteful use of cereals in non-essential luxuries, such as in the manufacture of liquor. I can assure him that, in my opinion, if food for starving peoples involves further rationing in Canada, the people of Canada will support any intelligent and necessary move in that direction.

We can remember, in the words of Geoffrey Francis Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, that "There is one task ready to the hands of the united nations in which we can all unite and which divides none—the task of common humanity, which makes the world one. That is to relieve as fast as possible the famine and starvation that is bringing many millions in many nations to misery and death."

The house will, I am certain, give its approval to the proposed loan of \$1,250 million to the United Kingdom. The agreement is a recognition not only of the suffering of the British people but, in part—and I should like to emphasize the words "in part"—that our future prosperity depends upon the future ability of our best customer to trade with us.

Again, I want to use the word "trade" advisedly for, while the United Kingdom cannot export commodities in exchange for our goods just now, she can do so in the future. I believe that she will, if our own domestic tariff policies make it possible for us to receive those goods. If we receive those goods, they will make a contribution to our own standards of living in Canada. I am glad to know that there is in prospect a conference at which the opening up of channels of trade and the wiping out of these unnecessary barriers will be discussed by some of the great nations.

But let us bear in mind that the proceeds of that loan spent in Canada will provide only partial and temporary relief to our unemployment and farm problems. Other more comprehensive domestic policies must be promoted.

I am glad to note, then, that the government intends to encourage the highest possible production this year. I had been disturbed by reports of speeches by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) in western Canada urging what seemed to me, and I think also to the people of western Canada, a somewhat different policy.

Certainly advice to prairie farmers to increase cereal production invites some risk—and I admit this readily—of a reduction in otherwise necessary summerfallow, which may lead to the depletion of moisture in 1947. But 1946 is the crucial year, and we must take some risks in order to assist in sustaining human life in many countries.

I think there is little likelihood of our accumulating any surpluses; but if there were, this country, profiting surely from past experiences, should establish intelligent policies under which surpluses of grain would become national reserves against future shortages.

The lack of intelligent policies accounts for the fluctuation in the production of agricultural commodities. Uncertainty with regard to prices of farm products is already causing a serious decline in some products. Agriculture needs the assurance of floor prices which will be reviewed from time to time and be set in relation to the cost of production and the sacrifices farmers made or are making to the maintenance of price ceilings. I wish to say at once that we cannot subscribe to the grain exchange propaganda that farm prices should be allowed to find their own levels by open market trading. True, levels of some farm products, notably wheat, would reach a high level now; but inevitably the day would come when they would become equally low. Consequently we believe the farmer desires, not high prices at one period and low prices at another, but some stability in price levels.

The farmer, like the industrial worker, wants fair, stabilized returns so that he may maintain a decent standard of living every day of every year. Such a plan can be achieved for agriculture through the encouragement of the cooperative movement and through public organizations under producer-consumer control having authority to regulate the assembly, storage, transportation and grading of grain, live stock, fruit, dairy and other farm products. This is not an easy task I readily admit; but I believe it is an essential task. And I hasten to say I also believe that it can and ultimately will be done.

A guaranteed farm income, however, requires, too, a comprehensive crop insurance plan. That is true not only in the prairie provinces