

*The Address—Mr. Fair*

"It was our hope that you would agree to take these quantities and we would be prepared to accept returns for them which would bear a reasonable relationship to the returns which are being provided to your own farmers. Canada and Britain are linked in tradition. Canada and Britain are one in their hopes for the future. We were just beginning to think that at last our common sorrows growing out of war were going to result in lasting joy when the root of all evil, 'money,' entered".

I may say this is a speech that was made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) to a Canadian chamber of commerce luncheon in the old country. Dealing with the 1949 contracts, he goes on to say:

To indicate that it was desired that, because of shortage of dollars with which to buy from us, it was expected that we would, as soon as possible, get our quantities of beef, bacon and eggs down to zero. When the United Kingdom traders came over this year they intimated that they could not find dollars with which to buy food, together with other purchases they desired to make, excepting wheat and cheese. They were, after much discussion, prevailed upon to find dollars with which to buy 160 million pounds of bacon and 46 million dozen of dried and storage eggs.

I am not making these statements to be critical of the United Kingdom government or its agents. I am making them to impress upon you the fact that the British people want our bacon, want our eggs, want our beef, want our wheat. I am making them to impress upon you that if dollar requirements had not intervened we would have been in a position to send you in 1949 over 300 million pounds of bacon, nearly 200 million pounds of beef, 80 million dozen of eggs, several hundred thousand barrels of apples, thousands of bushels of beans and much jam, none of which your traders feel you can afford to have from us because of the dollar shortage. We cannot sell the apples, beans, jam and salmon to anyone at any price under the present dollar arrangement, and for the moment we are finding it impossible to dispose of millions of bushels of linseed at 30 per cent less than you are paying others for it. They are taking 140 million bushels of wheat and 50 million pounds of cheese from us because they must have them, and we appear willing to provide them for fewer dollars than any other will supply them.

Then follows a paragraph of which I should like members on all sides of the house to take particular notice:

All this is bringing me to wonder if an unknown economist—or was it Abraham Lincoln or some such individual as Churchill?—was not right when he said that he would rather have the money in his pocket tied to the unthinking inanimate substance called gold which cannot change its mind than to the manipulations of some small group of crackpots who fancy themselves as economists or statesmen.

I take it the minister is referring to officials of the Department of Finance, and as our trading position stands at the present time I think they are pretty well named. In 1945 all parties, with the exception of the Social Crediters and one lone member of the Progressive Conservative party, the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Church), voted in favour of legislation which is causing much of our present difficulty. I thought I had better place that on record so that people

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may do some sound thinking before adopting another program of this kind. Further on the minister says:

I barged into a meeting where I was not intended to be the other day and heard one of your members of parliament imply, if he did not say it, that the Marshall plan is creating more communists in Europe than Stalin.

Commenting on that paragraph, Mr. Speaker, may I say that the policies of our present government are helping to create communists in Canada, because the potential production of this country is not being made available to the people, and for that reason people are dissatisfied and turning perhaps to communistic ways of life. Further on he says:

I am not convinced that this latter statement is correct, but I am convinced that the world is not in any state of mind where it can be expected to agree that the manipulation of any system or systems of currency is going to be allowed to interfere with the will of those who have empty stomachs when it is preventing surpluses of food to get to them. It might be a good thing for everybody if they would close down the united nations meetings long enough to permit the United Kingdom and United States experts to get together and settle some basis upon which dollars and sterling can be converted to allow nations like Canada to produce food to feed the starving millions and distribute it. If that cannot be done, then they might provide some means by which we may have an opportunity to fill our country with working people to develop the resources the world needs for its war and other machines, that they may eat the surpluses which are already piling up but which we are not permitted to sell.

I say again, sir, that this is a direct result of legislation that has been passed in this house. It is about time we took action to relieve the suffering of people in other countries, and relieve a lot of the distress in this country as well, by having at least some of the disadvantages arising from that legislation remedied. So far as we are concerned we want to have international agreements, if possible, and we also want to have the wheat board continued. I understand that every day of the week, including Sunday, certain people are asking that the wheat board be put out of business. We want it continued in operation and staffed by the very best men who can be obtained for the purpose. Personally I have no complaint whatever about the wheat board, and so far as I know, my group has no complaint whatever about the management of that organization in the past.

In spite of the advice given in the editorial in *Maclean's* magazine of January 15 last, we believe that floor prices should be established for agricultural products; otherwise you are going to destroy one of the greatest industries in the country. Conditions which people are prophesying for the near future will, if they prevail, tend to destroy our agricultural industry.