

The Address—Mr. Low

External Affairs that that does not represent the policy of the department. I want to say right here that I was not in any way criticizing the officers in the passport department. I have always found them to be most efficient in their conduct of the business of that department, and to be very helpful at all times. I was quite sure that if this had been done, as suggested in the editorial, it was because of policy or mistake, as has been shown, rather than of their own volition.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that most members of the house will welcome the statement in His Excellency's address that we will be asked to approve further assistance for relief and rehabilitation, for technical assistance and for continued participation in the Colombo plan. At the present time Canada could well afford much more substantial contributions for all these purposes than we made last year and the year before. As has already been pointed out in the house this afternoon, we have tremendous surpluses of food materials piled up in all parts of Canada. In some cases those surpluses have become a real hazard to our basic producers. They have been used as an excuse to depress prices to our farmers, fishermen and fruit growers. And yet, while we are wondering how to get the bountiful harvests of this year under cover for safety, there are millions of human beings in other and less favoured parts of the world who are starving or who are fighting a losing battle against poverty and ignorance.

The United States faces a problem similar to ours and perhaps somewhat worse than ours. Under their prices support plan, the government there has come into possession of \$3½ billion worth of food. Their storage facilities are taxed to the limit. Much of the produce they have is perishable, and much is spoiling. Last June President Eisenhower asked congress to provide him with legislative authority to give away hundreds of millions of dollars worth of these surplus foods to needy peoples in other lands. The President at that time indicated that he believed it was foolish to let food rot in federal warehouses while there are famines across the sea. He evidently feels that the surpluses which have become a political liability in the United States can be a diplomatic asset abroad. He feels, too, that real efforts should be made to distribute these surpluses in every part of the world.

Congress has given the President authority to dispose of vast quantities of these surpluses in a manner that is calculated to win friends for the western world. I was pleased to see the United States take the action which they did take. I was especially well pleased

to note that the President indicated he was prepared to sell surplus foods to other countries who wanted to buy them, and that he would accept their currencies in payment if that was the only means of clearing their trade deficits with the United States. Some of us in the house have been urging this government to loosen up on their rigid and indefensible trade policy and do a similar thing.

May I interpolate that it would have been refreshing in 1945, while the Bretton Woods debate was under way, if we had heard the leader of the C.C.F. make the suggestions he made this afternoon. Some of us did so because we realized what Bretton Woods was going to do to Canada. The President of the United States, however, has taken the initiative where Canada long ago should have been in the lead. I am sure our country would have been in a much better position today if soon after the war we had agreed to accept sterling in settlement of Great Britain's deficits with us. At least we would have had a far more secure market for our food materials than we now have, and in place of absolutely no food contracts with Britain, as is the situation at present, we doubtless would be sending large quantities of agricultural products to that country as well as to other parts of the commonwealth and areas that do accept sterling.

Out of the huge wheat carryovers from other years and from the bountiful harvest of 1953 we could, as I said before, well afford to send increased aid to less fortunate peoples and underdeveloped countries. Such gifts to hungry people would not only relieve human suffering; they would start shipments moving which would relieve the storage problem in Canada and make possible early deliveries and payments to farmers, which would in turn ease the serious credit situation that has been a great worry to the retail merchants of the country.

These gifts from our surplus food piles I suggest could be financed under the terms of the Finance Act of 1914 without imposing heavier taxation upon the Canadian people. There have been many thinkers in our country who have asked why the government should not issue to needy people right here in Canada tickets of claim against some of these food surpluses so as to distribute as much of them as possible amongst our own people. I am one of those who think that idea is entirely sound and feasible. That is exactly what Social Credit does propose and has been proposing for years.

I notice that the government is going to bring in a bill to amend the Bank Act to provide authority for the chartered banks to