

The Address—Mr. Coldwell

so quite correctly. Mr. H. A. Stevenson of the Canadian Barclays Bank noted that in this year, that is 1952 to date, that is to last week, our imports from the United States had increased from 69 per cent last year to 74.5 per cent, while our exports to the United States had dropped from 62 per cent to 53 per cent. In other words, what this showed was that we were buying more from the United States and now we are selling less to her while from the overseas countries we are buying less and selling more proportionately. This could, of course, lead to a decline in our total trade if it were accompanied by a lessening of defence buying, and that in turn could cause a serious disruption or even a recession in the Canadian economy.

May I add that this danger might become still more apparent if the new administration in the United States should revert to the type of policies the Republican administration adopted in the years before the 1930's. Looking over the cabinet appointments that have been announced, it seems certain that there will be at least a more conservative—spelled with a small "c"—business-dominated cabinet responsible for the economic and social policies of our great neighbour to the south than we have had for some years. Even under the much more liberal—again spelled with a small "l"—administration of Mr. Truman, we have been reminded of the dangers of depending on the United States markets. Indeed, in direct contravention of the general agreement on tariffs and trade made at Geneva, which we both signed and which we carried out to the letter, I believe, the United States restricted imports of fats, oils and dairy products, particularly cheese, coming from this and some other countries. We protested against what was done, but our protest did not meet with any significant results. Thus we have been warned that our future is in danger if we place too much reliance upon the unpredictable United States market. Hence I say to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Finance that we should re-examine our trade policies with the overseas countries at this conference in London and try to regain what in the past have been our stable markets.

I think this means something else. I think this means that Canada must do something. This means that our trade and tariff policies must be designed to assist non-dollar countries to export more goods in order to earn more dollars to pay for their purchases here. Let me say, as I said at the very outset, that I believe this is the crux of the dollar-sterling convertibility problem. There is no other solution of a permanent nature although, as I have already suggested, there may be some temporary expedients. We may make

loans and we may make investments in the sterling areas, but I would regard those as only temporary expedients and would say that the only way to solve the problem is to increase our exchange of goods with those countries.

It is perfectly obvious that when we use exclusively monetary terms, as we so often do, we obscure the real facts; because the real facts today necessitate an exchange of goods in order to bring about convertibility. It would indeed be unfortunate if in any way, at the conference in London next week, Canada adopted either a negative position or merely the position of an interested observer. From what the Prime Minister said I do not think that will be done, and I sincerely hope not.

I was going to say more about this matter, but I think tonight I should like to deal more particularly with another matter which was raised by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) in his amendment, namely a proposed national health plan. I think the reference in the speech from the throne will have caused considerable disappointment to a large number of Canadians who hoped that at long last we would get, at this session, legislation that would bring to the Canadian people a national health plan. I noted that the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon, I think unfairly, made the statement that the countries with socialized medicine were communist countries. I do not know. I have never been in a communist country. I have read that they have—

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, I wish to correct that statement immediately. I said they had state medicine in Russia, that they had state medicine in communist countries and that they also had state medicine in some countries that were strongly opposed to communism.

Mr. Coldwell: That is right, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition is right in correcting me in that respect. I recall now that that is exactly what he did say. But the emphasis was on the fact that the communist countries had this state medicine while the democratic countries also had it; but to my mind at least it seemed to convey the impression that they came afterwards and not before. As a matter of fact, in the democratic area there are many countries which have had national health plans for a great number of years. There are Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, and of course more recently the United Kingdom. Indeed, there are only three of what I might call the major democratic countries which are without some national health plan. Those three are the United States, Canada and Australia; and even in the Commonwealth of Australia there