

The Address—Mr. H. O. White

of the railroads today; it dealt with the arguments of the railroads; it dealt with the argument of the provinces, and it dealt with the argument of the consumers. It was a factual statement of the position as it stands today.

Mr. Knowles: That is not the way it was reported.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed from Monday, February 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. F. H. Larson for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Drew, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Coldwell.

Mr. H. O. White (Middlesex East): Mr. Speaker, with the galaxy of speakers that we had yesterday I wonder if I am going to be able to follow adequately in their footsteps. Like other speakers I wish first of all to convey my congratulations to the mover (Mr. Larson) and the seconder (Mr. Dumas) of the address in reply to the speech from the throne and compliment them upon the presentations they have made of the problems affecting their particular constituencies as well as of the broader picture of the Canadian position today.

When the leader of the Social Credit party (Mr. Low) spoke yesterday he referred to federal aid to education. I agree with what he said because of the burden that education imposes in many cases upon the home and land owner. They are the very best people in the land; they produce the wealth from which all our taxes must come. If this burden can be eased in any degree it will certainly be acceptable to the municipalities.

The hon. member also mentioned the possibility of accepting blocked sterling in payment of agricultural and other products sent abroad. I would point out to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the house that a couple of sessions ago I offered this very suggestion, so possibly we are coming closer to realizing that objective.

I was interested in what was said last evening by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Applewhaite) about his very interesting constituency. The hon. member also offered the suggestion that we of the opposition parties were apostles of gloom. I refute that suggestion, but I do say to the hon. member that we are not among those who are afraid to face the facts; and those facts are not too encouraging at the moment. Denying their existence does not answer the problem at all.

Before I go further with these marketing problems I want to deal with a few general questions that have come up since last session. I feel it is my duty first of all to interpret the opinions, the wishes and the desires of my constituency, which comprises the rural area of Middlesex East and about one-quarter of the city of London. Thus in my constituency there are both rural and urban interests. Many think they conflict, but actually they are closely associated, because if one part of our economy suffers it is not long until all other parts suffer as well. It seems to me that in a very limited way the speech from the throne reveals the condition of the ship of state; and it shows that in two particulars all is not well. I think it shows the state of mind, shall I say, of the temporary crew, which seems to be this: We fooled them in June; we can do it again. Hon. members will recall that years ago the Insull public utilities empire collapsed. When its assets were being liquidated they found a warehouse full of empty cartons. Here we have a warehouse full of empty promises by the government dealing with long-term price stability and what have you. If I were to give a short description of the speech from the throne I would do so in these words: Two bells, all's well; hell's bells, call out the watch.

From 1939 to 1949 we had 143 contracts with Europe. In 1936 we had 23 contracts. In 1950 we have 4, written in invisible ink on tissue paper. I want to point out the effect these disappearing markets are going to have on my people, not only those in the country but those in London and all the cities of Canada. I have figures from the dominion bureau of statistics showing the percentage of the consumer's dollar that trickles back to the producer. From 1913 to 1919, a fairly good, prosperous period, from 45 to 51 per cent of the consumer's dollar went to the primary producer. In 1920 a levelling off period commenced which continued until 1924, and during those years the primary producer received 40 per cent or less of the consumer's dollar. During that period there was a bit of unemployment and some unrest in the country. From 1925 to 1929 the primary producer received from 42 to 43 per cent of the consumer's dollar.

I do not need to recall to hon. members what happened in 1929. In 1930, the year of the great collapse, only 39 per cent of the consumer's dollar went to the producer, and by 1934 this had dropped to 32 per cent. Those were the years of mounting unemployment in our country. From 1935 to 1939, the first year of the war, the primary producer received only 39 per cent of the consumer's dollar.