

Mr. EDWARDS: The minister also said we should import less.

Mr. CRERAR: I grant that is one way to help the situation out.

Mr. EDWARDS: But that does not conform with what the hon. gentleman has already said.

Mr. CRERAR: I do not wish to get into any controversy across the floor with my hon. friend from Frontenac (Mr. Edwards) whom I esteem very highly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, where does the remedy lie for this condition of our exchange? It lies in greater production in this country and in selling more goods. It lies also in curtailing imports from United States: But we shall make a mistake if we adopt the policy, by artificial means of controlling and regulating the imports into, or even the exports from Canada. As to this question of greater production I would suggest to the Government—I am not sure that the Minister of Finance (Sir Henry Drayton) whom I hold in very high respect will be willing to take my advice—but at any rate I suggest for his careful consideration when he is framing the Budget to be shortly submitted to Parliament, that he give due regard to this question of encouraging development of our natural industries and of encouraging production in this country in all its forms.

After all, where does the wealth in Canada come from? It lies within our great undeveloped natural resources. We are producing, for instance, in Canada on an average three hundred million bushels of wheat a year, and we have scarcely touched the fringe of the possibilities of development in that regard. Much of our great mining areas are as yet scarcely touched. We also have large timber resources in Canada. How are we going to make these productive? We must place people upon the land. But when we do that we must furnish them with the implements of production to work with. I would therefore suggest to the Minister of Finance that when he is framing his Budget for the coming year he take this fact into account and that he remove from the tools and implements of production in Canada, whether it is for the forest, the farm, or the mine, the duties that at present increase their cost.

Mr. PETER MCGIBBON (Muskoka): Would the hon. gentleman go as far as he is reported to have said he would go in removing all duties in this country?

Mr. CRERAR: My hon. friend should not get excited. If he will wait for a moment he will get the information for which he is seeking.

Now, in what field of development can we most readily and easily find a response in this country? I submit, Sir, that it is in agriculture; and I venture this statement, that if Canada in the last forty years had given one quarter of the assistance in the development of agriculture that she has accorded directly by way of bounties and indirectly by way of a protective tariff, to manufacturing industries in the Dominion, our wealth as a nation would be greater and our population would be larger than it is at the present time. I would point out to the House the excellent and splendid advantage that Canada enjoys in this regard. We have a country that is essentially an agricultural country. We know that our provinces, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, are rich in agricultural possibilities. We can take the Maritime Provinces, and we can take the province of Quebec and the province of Ontario; they contain vast undeveloped agricultural possibilities. We have our Western prairies that are as capable of producing one billion bushels of wheat as they are of producing three hundred million bushels. Finally we have the province of British Columbia where resources, although more varied, still contain great agricultural possibilities. I would direct this thought again to my protectionist friends in this House, that the farmers of this country are to-day in the position, where they are selling practically everything they produce in open competition with the world and are buying in a restricted market everything they require for the purpose of production. I can say also that it will take a very long time indeed to convince the farmers of western Canada, for example, that there is any virtue in the principle of protection, especially in a customs tariff. The argument of the protectionist is that we must have this form of state assistance to industry in order to build up a home market and make us independent of outside countries.

But the fact is that we would require 50,000,000 souls to consume the wheat we now produce in this country, and the same applies to practically every other line of our agricultural products. Let us look at the opportunities that lie ahead of us. Canada occupies the northern half of this continent. Immediately to the south of us there is a vast country that will soon become a food importing country. To-day