

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

"Socra" came from Russia. It is a rather interesting thing that "Socra" spelled backwards is "Arcos". Arcos is the name of a trading organization which was expelled from Britain just before the war for its treacherous activities. It may be just an accident, but it would indeed be a remarkable thing if the letters transposed in that way had such an interesting similarity to the name of a company with a background of that kind.

In saying this, may I emphasize the fact that the people of Britain do not welcome this substitution of Russian products for our own. There are many people in Britain who are refusing to buy any of these Russian products although they may be the only products of the kind available in many cases. Our problem, as I have pointed out before, is to find a way to sell just as their problem is to find how they can buy.

Even in the face of this situation in regard to food products, and particularly the tremendous production of grain to which reference has already been made this afternoon, the government speaks with different voices at different times. Confronted with the largest wheat crop and the largest carry-over for many years, the attitude of some members of the government seems to be one of light optimism—not shared by the Minister of Agriculture, who is very directly associated with this problem.

As recently as October 27, the Minister of Agriculture had this to say about the situation, and I quote the words attributed to him by the Canadian Press:

In this country we now have 900 million bushels of wheat. At the outside, the whole world takes 900 million bushels in one year in international trade. There is also a considerable carry-over in the United States. Long before the crop is marketed our people will be wishing we had another four-year contract with Britain to take 400 million bushels of our wheat.

In the centre of the great wheat-growing area of Canada, the Minister of Agriculture did not minimize the danger of our position unless we are able to re-open our markets for wheat as well as for other food products.

While I am speaking of the position created by the enormous carry-over of wheat this year, there is one point which should be mentioned, and which undoubtedly is affected by statements made this afternoon. Farmers are finding it impossible in many cases to deliver their grain to the market, we are informed, no matter what steps are being taken. The whole system of handling and distribution has broken down. The government, no matter what its explanation may be, has failed to take effective steps to provide for the handling of grain, in spite of the knowledge many months ago, and the warnings many months ago, that this

situation was going to arise. In western Canada today there are many farmers, with huge quantities of wheat and other grains worth considerable sums of money, who are unable to get money at this time to cover their harvesting and living expenses because of their inability to deliver that grain to market.

This is a situation with which the government should deal immediately. It is urgent and calls for attention without delay. It must be remembered, however, that this is an incident of the whole situation which has arisen as a result of the failure of the government to take steps in time to assure markets for our surplus food products, of which the government was amply warned. It was asked to take the initiative in finding ways to sell these products, but it turned down our proposals every time they were presented.

I have been discussing this subject on different occasions, and I have left no doubt that I hope that every possible step will be taken at this conference to re-open and expand our trade with Britain, the commonwealth and the sterling areas. I have used the expression that the government of Canada should do all within its power to remove the roadblock which is preventing the normal movement of trade between Canada, Great Britain, the other nations of the commonwealth and the sterling area generally. I have stated in this house on earlier occasions that our objective must be a free interchangeability of currencies, which will make it possible to carry out trading arrangements in the way in which we always did in the past.

I could not help noticing the light, flippant way in which that suggestion was dealt with by certain members of the government. The other day in the press I saw, emanating from those anonymous but well informed sources, indications that the representatives of the government are going to seek that measure of interchangeability when they arrive at London. We do not know, of course, because names are never attached to these statements made on behalf of the government, such as that to which I referred.

I have read statements by the members of the government brushing this suggestion aside, and seeking to convey the impression that I was urging restrictive practices. There is no truth whatever in that suggestion. I am sure that those who have made it are fully aware of that fact. I have been urging the freeing of trade from the restrictions imposed by our inability to deal in the ordinary way with the currencies of the commonwealth and the sterling area generally.