

*The Address—Mr. Low*

to provide better educational facilities through setting up centralized schools. It becomes necessary for them to buy vans and school busses to convey the pupils to those centralized schools. Such purchases are increasing in number year by year, but the federal government continues to impose sales and excise taxes on these vehicles; this action puts a heavy penalty on the educational facilities that are to be provided. Here then, I say, is a place where the government can do something for education; and I urge that at this session there be brought in an amendment to the various excise and taxation acts providing that the purchase of busses and vans by school boards be made tax free. Surely, Mr. Speaker, if we are not prepared to make grants in aid for education, we can at least get off the backs of the school districts; and here is a good chance to do it.

There is a fourth way of course. This one would involve some moneys out of the treasury. The best way to help the provinces to carry their educational burdens would be by grants-in-aid on a weighted basis to favour the poorer localities. Surely, a country as wealthy as ours should not find it too difficult to provide some money for this purpose. No argument to the contrary can possibly be valid as long as Canadians spend hundreds of millions of dollars on intoxicating liquors and other things with which we are trying to destroy ourselves.

The Social Credit Association of Canada declares that no financial consideration should be allowed to stand between any worthy Canadian boy or girl and the utmost in educational attainment he wants and is prepared to achieve and is capable of achieving.

Closely related to this whole business of federal aid to education is the problem of public relations. During the past two years this government has made a wretched failure of its part in the democratic process. I agree with what the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) said this afternoon in this respect. The government has failed to keep the electors informed about the facts of the situations that have developed. Somehow or other the ministers of the crown have come to feel that there is no obligation on their part to keep the electors informed about the real facts of trade, agriculture, unemployment, and the many other things that do develop from time to time. These things affect the lives of the people most materially. A good many people now feel that the government has not only failed to keep them informed about things they are entitled to know but that various ministers at various times have actually misled them and tried to lull them into a sense of false security.

All during the general election of last June and during the fall session of 1949 government spokesmen contended that all was well with Canadian trade and agriculture. The fact is that we faced at these very times a serious trade crisis which kicked back on our farmers as well as on some of our manufacturing industries, so that they too now face a serious crisis. We only have to recall the press reports for the months of December and January last to know how Canadian farmers feel. In many of their forums and conventions they were actually advocating production strikes in protest against conditions imposed upon them as a result of this government's bungling and vacillating policies. Thousands of farmers feel that the government is now trying to crawl out from under their responsibilities. During the period from 1942 to 1948 the Liberal government imposed certain policies upon our farmers under which the latter had to accept much less for their products than they would have received if those policies had not been imposed upon them. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) has said so himself. The farmers did not complain because they were given to understand that these policies were part of a long-range stabilization program. Now the farmers are beginning to realize that Liberal talk and promise were unadulterated anaesthesia. There is general restlessness amongst them because they cannot now see any possibility of realizing the stabilized prices the government promised them. It will certainly be a serious breach of faith if this government of Canada does not keep its promise to provide stabilization for agriculture.

I wish to repeat, there is restlessness amongst Canadian farmers and many of our smaller manufacturers. Why is it?

This government has complicated and further confused Canada's already serious trade and agricultural problems, and has put us in that position where the possibility of depression stares us in the face, by refusing to face up to realities and to take independent action based upon the facts of the situation. Let me repeat that—by their refusal to take independent action based upon the realities of the situation. How can this fail to affect our security? As an example, the government has steadfastly refused to accept non-convertible sterling in payment for those foods and other things which Britain did not have the dollars to buy. I quite agree with the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggan (Mr. Coldwell) that right from the beginning we should have attempted to preserve our traditional markets in Britain and in Europe by accepting sterling for these balances for which the British and other markets in Europe could not find dollars.