

Britain. Among these are the cancellation of the United Kingdom debt to us of \$425 million, arising out of the commonwealth air training plan; also provision for the extension of the 1942 interest-free loan to Britain until 1951, a loan which originally, I understand, was \$700 million and which has been reduced now to \$500 million. In addition there is the settlement of war-time claims and counter-claims between Britain and Canada, including the cost of food and other supplies furnished Britain since V-J day.

Speaking of these huge transactions, we sometimes overlook their full implications. What this loan in fact means is that for five years the Canadian taxpayer will pay interest on it which, even at 2½ per cent, will be \$30 million a year, and at the same rate on the extension of the 1942 interest-free loan he will pay \$14 million. On the \$425 million obligation which has been written off, the Canadian taxpayer will still have to pay \$10 million a year in interest, and eventually the principal as well. These figures total an annual payment exceeding \$50 million for each of the next few years.

At the same time it is well that we appreciate that after all it is a contribution to prevent unemployment in Canada till trade is once more resumed. We have unemployment now. I ask anyone in Canada who opposes this measure, what unemployment would be like if we did not lend this money to Britain and have it spent in Canada in order to give jobs. As I said, it is in fact an unemployment prevention measure, to be paid for by the Canadian taxpayer to the extent that interest and principal are not fully paid by the borrower, the British taxpayer.

With some members of the government I went through the difficulties of the depression years of the thirties in Manitoba—the difficulties encountered in connection with unemployment—and I suggest that if we had been doing then some of the things that we are doing now we would have come through that condition much better than we did. In the whole of those ten years this government spent only one thousand million on relief. Now, in one loan to another country, to buy goods from us, which will enable us to give jobs to our people, it is raising and giving a loan of \$1,250 million.

I come now to export credits. The government says they have extended certain credits. There is on the statute book an Export Credits Insurance Act giving the government power to advance credits to foreign countries to an amount of \$750 million. I believe—

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes.

Mr. BRACKEN: Since the house prorogued, it is reported that a number of credits have been extended to different countries. I make no comment on this. We support the idea in principle. I should like, however, to ask three questions which I hope the minister will answer in his budget, though I would appreciate it if he could give the answer sooner. I wish to ask that the Minister of Finance advise us, at the next sitting if possible, all the countries to which credits have been advanced and the amount advanced to each. We see reports of these things in the papers, but I would ask the minister to inform us of the interest rate and terms of payment under each of these loan transactions. I also ask that the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance advise us of the financial position as between this country and Russia, what mutual aid has been given and received, and what credits or other transactions have occurred since the end of the war.

The speech from the throne refers to trade—exports and imports. This country, like many others, is seeking to save itself by increasing its exports. Somebody has told us that three persons out of every eight have jobs in Canada because we have an export business. In this connection I trust the government has learned the lesson that the last two decades have taught so clearly, namely, that nations cannot continue to export and be paid for their exports if they do not import. The nations of the world are all trying to export. Only in recent months has there been a general recognition that we have to import if we are to export.

In connection with trade matters I have two questions to ask the government. The United States government has announced plans for calling an international conference on trade. The government of Canada has been invited to attend. The United Kingdom government has invited the commonwealth countries to a free conference on the same matter, and I presume Canada will attend. In this connection I wish to ask, and I think that parliament is entitled to know, what attitude the Canadian government will take at those conferences with respect to the question of empire preference.

We are hearing much about trade agreements which the government has been negotiating with other countries. I would ask the government to make a statement at the earliest possible moment as to the terms of any agreements made since the last report was made to the house, and the present state of any negotiations now under way.