

Of international problems, the world shortage of food has caused the greatest immediate concern. It is a source of gratification to the people of Canada to know that our country has provided over one-fifth of the supply of food to relieve the greatest famine in human history. The government has continued to give practical expression to the wholehearted desire of the Canadian people to relieve human suffering and to contribute to international tranquillity.

My Ministers are continuing their efforts to restore and expand peacetime markets for the surplus production of our country. In the period of transition, exports to our wartime allies have been financed in part by credits voted by Parliament. In accordance with this policy, you have approved a financial agreement with the United Kingdom and made a further amendment to the Export Credit Insurance Act.

A bountiful crop, which will help in meeting the demand for food, now seems assured. An agreement has been made with the United Kingdom for the marketing of our wheat. The wheat agreement, with agreements for the marketing of other foodstuffs already in operation, will greatly assist the government in its policy of maintaining stable prices for agricultural products.

The demand, both at home and abroad, for Canadian manufactures has never been greater. Production at a high level is required both to meet this demand and to check inflationary pressure on prices.

The wartime battle against inflation has been continued with substantial success through the period of transition. Despite gradual measures of decontrol, and a shift to a selective price ceiling, the rise of prices has been held well in check. To this end, a most important step was the restoration of exchange parity with the United States dollar.

The conversion of our war industries to peacetime production has been achieved more smoothly and speedily and with less dislocation than might have been expected. Opportunities for employment have been maintained at a high level and the transfer to civilian occupations of displaced war workers and demobilized veterans is being accomplished swiftly and effectively.

In recent weeks essential production has been slowed down, and the dangers of inflation increased, by stoppages of work in certain key industries. My Ministers endorse the view of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations that continued price control is only possible with a reasonable measure of wage control. The government is firmly convinced that the exercise of moderation and restraint by all parties is essential to the satisfactory adjustment of labour disputes and the maintenance of the high level of production without which there cannot be ample opportunities for employment.

The repatriation of the armed forces is now virtually completed. It is anticipated that the wives and children of veterans will almost all have been brought to Canada by the close of the present year. The demobilisation of the wartime army, navy and air force is likewise practically accomplished. Foundations have been laid for the permanent peacetime defence forces.

A series of measures relating to war veterans has been enacted, with the object of making provision for the veterans, and for the dependents of the fallen, worthy of the service and sacrifice of Canada's armed forces.

In Canada, as in other countries, the housing shortage has grown more acute since the end of the war, despite the provision of a large supply of new housing. In order to increase the efficiency of governmental action, the responsibility for housing has been largely concentrated in one Minister of the Crown. The National Housing Act has been amended to expand facilities for the provision of housing.