

important of the many things that Canada has to be thankful for, from an economic point of view, is that both during the war and the reconstruction period her affairs were not in the hands of public men who, however well-intentioned, had that absolute lack of consistency in principle that is evidenced by the present leaders of the Progressive Conservative party. I think, honourable senators, that there has been more blowing hot and cold on major questions by the Progressive Conservatives recently than there ever was by any other political party in the history of Canada.

Hon. Mr. MORAUD: Small stuff.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I do not know of one major issue with which this country is faced that you could get two leading members of the Progressive Conservative party to agree on. They blow hot and cold on controls. My honourable friend urges that the control be taken off rents, and some other members of his party urge that it be kept on. There was scathing criticism of subsidies, and there has been scathing criticism of their discontinuance. I do not need to remind honourable members of what happened in two recent by-elections in eastern Canada. Despite the fact that the York-Sunbury riding in New Brunswick has been traditionally Conservative, and that the Halifax seat has in the past been won as often by the Conservatives as by the Liberals, the Progressive Conservative party's vacillating policy on major questions facing this country today was such that that party lost both elections; and indeed in Halifax its candidate dropped to third place.

Hon. Mr. QUINN: That was not the reason why they lost.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: My honourable friend says that was not the reason. Well, certainly the party's presentation was not regarded very highly by the constituents, or else they would have voted differently. My honourable friend knows that.

What is the situation in this country? The honourable leader opposite (Hon. Mr. Haig) paints a gloomy picture; but I suggest to him and to all other honourable members that the position of Canada today, when everything is taken into consideration, is a very satisfactory one. I suggest that, chiefly of course as a result of the good sense and intelligence of the people of Canada, but also because of the administrative programmes of the government during the war and in this period of return to normal conditions, Canada has

achieved a degree of economic prosperity that is perhaps not exceeded in any country in the world. This economic prosperity, largely by reason of administrative action, has been distributed so fairly and reasonably over the whole mass of the people, and the cost of living has been so kept down during war years, that the position of the average Canadian today is one that can only be appreciated when looked at objectively. Despite the dismal picture so graphically painted by my honourable friend of the circumstances of farmers in his province and in eastern Canada, in all seriousness I ask honourable senators to bear in mind how the income of the major primary industry of this country has improved. Anyone acquainted with the facts knows that the gross and net return of agriculture this year will probably reach a figure which, if not a peak, is at least twice as high as it was before the war. And further, as my honourable friend knows full well, this high income has been utilized wisely in reducing outstanding obligations to an extent never before attained in this country. Never before has the agricultural income been put to such good use as a hedge against the future.

What is true of agriculture is true also of other branches of industry. My honourable friends who are engaged in manufacturing know that their industries were never in a happier position than today. They have paid off their obligations or refunded them at lower interest rates, and there are bulging treasuries; in fact, some people think that financial conditions in this country are almost excessively good. In the light of the situation as we find it, one would have to be pretty pessimistic and take a very narrow view of conditions to arrive at the conclusion which my honourable friend expressed—indeed I have grave doubts that my honourable friend himself has in fact reached such a conclusion.

We are faced with problems arising to a considerable degree out of our great prosperity. Our price level has been kept down to such a point that it is impossible for most other countries to sell in our market. It is for this reason that, for instance, our traditional customer and supplier, Great Britain, finds it very difficult today to sell in the Canadian market. At the same time the pent-up purchasing power of this country, resulting from wartime savings and unprecedented wages, salaries and general returns from business, has tried to find an outlet in the customary way; and as we ourselves have not been producing sufficient goods to meet the demand, we have been buying heavily from the United States. This has brought about some serious conse-