

The Budget—Mr. Dinsdale

things came in response to the social facts that existed during those difficult days of change. They did not occur only in Canada. Canada is not the only country with a social security and social welfare program. I am sure that no hon. member in this chamber can lay claim to credit for what took place in the United States, in the United Kingdom or in other European countries. They came about as a result of social pressures coming in the wake of the emergence of the western world into an urban, industrial civilization. Therefore I say that we cannot draw the parallel too closely between conditions today and those that existed in 1929. Yet the distress signals are out.

The government has been strangely apathetic and nonchalant in the face of the storm signals. Certainly the opposition has given the warning repeatedly during the past few years. I have sat in this house since 1951. In my first session the budget debate was largely around the theme of inflation resulting from a soft-money policy; and inflation is still with us despite the juggling of the price index. It is obvious that it is still with us because we repeatedly receive representations from pensioners of all kinds and those who are forced to live on lower incomes. In addition to the soft-money policy, we have criticized the philosophy of softness that has been propagated by the government, the idea that the great white father at Ottawa will look after you. As an example of that sort of propaganda we have it suggested from time to time that any other group in office at Ottawa would take away all these nice things that come from the hands of an all-benevolent and beneficent government.

Then we have mentioned the lost United Kingdom markets, a subject that has been discussed off and on in Canada for the past three or four years. I remember taking part in 1950 in a citizens' forum discussion which dealt with the difficulties arising from the loss of our United Kingdom markets. The subject of convertibility has also appeared repeatedly, and I am delighted to see that the Minister of Finance is taking a more positive interest in this problem. It is basic of course to the stability of our Canadian economy which depends for its lifeblood upon a healthy export trade.

It could be that the reason for the seeming nonchalance and apathy on the part of the government is that it has grown soft, flabby and complacent from old age and too much royal jelly. It is said that with old age comes hardening of the arteries. One of the characteristics of hardening of the arteries is the failure to remember recent events but an ability to go away back to the beginning

of things with a very clear insight into earlier events. Perhaps the return of a more orthodox Liberalism is another evidence of the tendency towards senility and the resulting hardening of the arteries.

On the other hand, the apathy and nonchalance might merely be a very carefully thought out policy, the desire to play possum in order to stave off the psychological impact of depression thinking. The preamble of the United Nations charter says:

Since war begins in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the bulwarks of peace must be built.

I believe that statement is just as true of depression as it is of war. To a large extent depressions begin in the minds of men. Going back to the 1930's, as a result of the depression psychology then prevalent there was retrenchment just at the time when confidence and expansion were needed. At that time the Liberals, as can be seen from reading the debates of those days, were at the wailing wall preaching blue ruin, as seems to be characteristic of oppositions. There is a psychological impact that affects the economic trend in a country.

I have introduced this point because members of this house from the west are sometimes accused of crying perpetual blue ruin. I suggest that is not true because the west has learned to take adversity during its relatively short history. The west has largely been in a pioneer era during that whole period. Westerners sometimes quote a poem that illustrates this position and it is to this effect:

Out where the world is in the making,

Out where fewer hearts in despair are breaking,
That's where the west begins.

Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
Where there's more of living and less of dying,
Where a man makes friends without half trying,
That's where the west begins.

I think that is a very excellent expression of the spirit of the west, but I want to point out that just a few weeks ago the Minister of Trade and Commerce, when speaking to the chamber of commerce in the city of Winnipeg, accused western members of crying wolf, and implied that western members were poor public relations representatives for their constituencies. This of course is not very flattering to those of us from the west. I think he also included Liberal members as well as those on the opposition side of the house. Certainly their recurring election theme, do you want to go back to the dirty thirties, is conducive to this depression psychology. This unfortunately is the sort of thing that encourages the splintering on the prairies which is plaguing our federal system today.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]