

The Budget—Mr. Macdonnell

toward higher tariffs. We can only pray that it will not lead toward similar disastrous effects for Canada as it did then, though, fortunately, a Liberal administration, five years later, came to the rescue and paved the way to a period of unprecedented prosperity.

The timing of this budget just shortly before Christmas gave hope to many that it would contain some tax cuts and, certainly, the removal of the sales tax on soft drinks. This is a commodity which is largely consumed by children and by people who do not indulge in alcoholic beverages. The industry is faced with increased overhead in the form of machinery and higher wages. At the same time bottling works are reluctant to increase the cost to the consumers. Elimination of the tax would not only encourage expansion of facilities but would provide employment for more people and lead to a greater consumption of sugar products, thus helping the sugar beet farmer. In other words, the benefits would spread over a wide area to the advantage of many people, to say nothing of the encouragement to consume non-alcoholic beverages and thus promote sober habits with beneficial results to all concerned.

This budget will not help much in the promotion of jobs for the 3,250 unemployed people in my constituency. The Canadian Car Company plant in Fort William is one of the most spacious and modern manufacturing establishments of its kind in Canada. It has facilities for the employment of several thousand workers, and during the second world war it employed up to 7,000. It has a record for building aircraft of all kinds and description. It has built buses, trailers and ships, and yet approximately only 400 people are now employed. This company's engineers, with the assistance of technicians from the Department of National Defence, have developed an amphibious vehicle known as the Bobcat, which incidentally, was demonstrated to the new Minister of National Defence only a month or so ago.

It is true that the budget did not mention aid under the Colombo plan, but I suggest that in any future Canadian contribution under this arrangement serious consideration should be given to the inclusion of a number of these vehicles. Vehicles of this type would prove of great help to underdeveloped countries, and in the event that the production of this vehicle is proceeded with I urge the government to award the contract to the Fort William plant of the Canadian Car Company.

With all the sincerity I can command I wish to express the hope that the suggestions which have been made, such as the removal of the excise tax on automobiles, the removal of the sales tax on soft drinks, measures to

keep the dollar at a level not exceeding that of the United States dollar, a loosening up of the availability of money, the creation of a municipal loan fund and a move toward the re-establishment of a Canadian merchant marine will be recognized by the minister. I hope the hon. gentleman will give serious consideration to including them in the next regular budget which, presumably, will be introduced during the coming months of March or April.

Hon. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, for the warmth of my reception. I am not at all sure, however, that as I go along the feeling will be so good. It is difficult to believe that at this stage one has anything new to say but I do not feel that this budget needs to have much further said in its defence, especially after the blitz we have had from the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Walker) this evening.

Indeed, I had better begin my remarks with a confession. I am afraid I am going to give something in the nature of a sermon. It is said that every Presbyterian has at least one sermon in him. I have not yet preached my sermon so perhaps I shall do so this evening. If I fail to attract the attention of hon. members I shall have to resort to what Benjamin Disraeli said following his first speech during which he was given a very rough time. He said, "You have not listened to me now but the time will come when you will listen to me." At any rate, I have a text and my text comes from the inaugural address of the President of the United States. It is this:

To those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves—

—if the free society cannot help the many who are poor, it can never save the few who are rich.

I commend those last words to the house and ask that hon. gentlemen pay particular attention to the fact that the president in addition to his humanitarian feelings, which do him credit, had a hardboiled, realistic warning to sound, and I wish to indulge in both of those tonight.

I spoke on this a year ago but I cannot believe that I made a very profound impression. Indeed, I think I was regarded as a kind of egghead, possibly harmless but certainly not very interesting. I believe that to some extent public opinion has moved since then. At that time I quoted the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming) and I should like on this occasion to repeat their words which I quoted at that time. The Prime Minister said:

Economic assistance to underdeveloped countries is a major and mandatory need if freedom is to be preserved in the world.