

progress and reform to the Canadian people. That has made a striking appeal to the youth of our country, young men and women of high ideals, many of whom will be voting for the first time during the coming election. Those addresses have also appealed to all men of progressive thought who desire conditions improved, who have at heart the interests of their fellow men throughout the length and breadth of Canada. The illness of the Prime Minister has indicated to him, I am sure, and to those of us who sit on this side of the house, how much his efforts have really been appreciated by the Canadian people. There have been expressions of sympathy and good will all across this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, voicing the desire of the Canadian people that he may soon be restored to health. I am quite certain that it is also the earnest desire of perhaps not all the Canadian people but at least a fair majority of them that he may be enabled to serve his country as prime minister for at least another five years.

Mr. H. E. SPENCER (Battle River): With the hon. members who have preceded me, may I compliment the Minister of Finance (Mr. Rhodes) upon having so ably presented this year's budget in regard to which he has had a very difficult task. However with his great ability he presented that budget to the House of Commons and painted conditions in Canada in such colours that anyone who did not know the real situation might have thought all was well. I was interested also in listening to the critic of the opposition, the hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth (Mr. Ralston), who painted the other side of the picture and made it exceedingly blue. In criticizing the budget he moved an amendment which opens with the following words:

This house regrets that the proposals submitted by the Minister of Finance on March 22 are entirely inadequate to meet the serious and acute situation prevailing in Canada.

Then in the second part of his amendment the opposition recommended that the people of Canada go to the polls to send back possibly another government. While we can agree entirely with the first part of the amendment, because the proposals in the present budget do not meet our problems, we certainly cannot see any good in supporting the second part, as it would have the effect, even if the opposition were returned at the polls, simply of putting them into power in place of the present government, and we are going to the polls anyway. I have had the honour of being in this house for fourteen years, and during the last five, although we

[Mr. Shaver.]

have not agreed with many proposals the government have put forward, I must admit, to be fair with them, that they have put far more progressive legislation on the statute books in the last five years than the opposition did during their nine years' regime. Therefore, in considering the budget as presented by the Minister of Finance, we moved through the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Coote)—who presented our subamendment in a very able way—the following motion:

This house regrets that the proposals submitted by the Minister of Finance on March 22 are entirely inadequate to meet the acute and serious situation prevailing in Canada and would appear to be based upon the assumption that poverty and debt are inevitable conditions within the country;

And whereas the real and potential wealth of the nation, based upon our natural resources and our capacity to produce, is such as to make possible an abundant provision for all the requirements of our people;

Therefore, this house is of the opinion that the government should take immediate action to insure the fullest and most equitable distribution possible of our socially-created wealth and that, as a first step in this direction, the measures which may be necessary to meet the pressing needs of the farmers and the unemployed should be financed by the social credit of Canada, thus avoiding a further increase in the debt burden of the country.

Anyone who has followed the situation in Canada at all during the past few years knows perfectly well that we have some very serious problems facing us, problems in relation to agriculture, railways, trade, health, debt, and taxation. It is for that reason that we saw fit to move our subamendment; we could not see anything in the purely negative amendment and we wished to submit something constructive. The government intimates in the budget that poverty and debt are inevitable. With this we do not agree. Real wealth in Canada to-day is greater than it has ever been. All across this country in after dinner speeches one hears time and time again of the wonderful potential wealth of Canada. There is too much lip service given to the potential wealth of the country and not enough real consideration of how that great wealth might be properly distributed. Our problem to-day, as so many hon. members admit, although they do not act upon it, is one of distribution, not of production. Physically we are a very rich nation; we are poor only financially. Under our present economy we are in the extraordinary position that the more we produce or the richer we become in physical assets the poorer we become financially. In other words the more we produce the more poverty we have, particularly in our urban centres.