

*The Budget—Mr. Dinsdale*

the science of meaning, and deals with the real meaning of verbal symbols. I believe when the minister referred to the temporary slowing down of the economy, what he actually meant was that we have over 500,000 unemployed.

In addition to that there is a sharp drop in the farmers' income, and I have before me some statistics which demonstrate that point. With reference to the price situation as regards our farmers we should take into consideration the net income which depends not on farming prices alone, but also on farm prices in relation to farm costs. In 1951 we find that the index for farm prices stood at 296.8 and in 1952 the index stood at 272.6, and there is every indication to suggest that the figures for 1953 will indicate a further drop of from 5 to 10 per cent. At the same time the cost of the things the farmer was buying in 1951 stood at an index of 230 and in 1952 at 243.1, according to the *Farm Forum Guide* of January 11, 1954. That index is rising in proportion to the price he receives for his goods so that the farmer is caught in a price squeeze.

I also believe that this "temporary slowing down" refers to the decline in the sale of automobiles, and farm machinery as well. If we get behind the meaning of this phrase it would appear it also includes the loss of the United Kingdom markets for our agricultural products.

So far as the use of the phrase "cost and price adjustment" is concerned, I believe here, if we again get behind the Ottawa semantics, the minister was thinking of the increase in the failure rate among small businesses, the increase in loss-leader selling and, on the prairies, the situation where we find the retail stores working on a cash basis because of the inability of the farm customers to pay on the line due to the shortage of cash. All these things are, I believe, behind the phrase "cost and price adjustment."

Then there is the other phrase to which I have already referred, namely "improved supply position." Obviously in behind that bit of semantics we have an increase in the process of dumping as is evidenced by the passage of Bill No. 29 in this house earlier in the session, and again with reference to the lost markets, the decrease in purchasing power due to the wheat glut and the resulting unemployment.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that these phrases are typical of Liberal vagueness which has been exemplified by the much vaunted middle of the road policy initiated at the onset of the depression by the man Mr. Bruce Hutchison called "The Blondin of

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Politics", the late Right Hon. Mr. Mackenzie King. The Liberal party took to political tightrope walking during the depression, and indeed it had to because it was the only way by which Liberalism could survive under rapidly changing world conditions.

It is a well-known fact that Liberalism has virtually disappeared in Britain and in other European countries. In this connection I was very interested to read, a short time ago, excerpts from a dissertation written by the present Secretary of State (Mr. Pickersgill) when he was a professor of history in the province of Manitoba. Under the heading of "The Failure of Liberalism" he had this to say:

It is not remotely likely that the decay of orthodox liberalism can be arrested for very long . . . It is small wonder that economic liberalism is discredited . . . Classical liberalism is dead. As a political creed it is bankrupt.

I believe that is an excellent summation of the situation which prevailed during the twenties and in the early thirties. Another political commentator, the late Mr. Harold Laski, of the London school of economics, wrote in similar vein under the heading "The Decline of Liberalism".

However, in this country Liberalism has survived by means of very clever political tightrope walking which has resulted in a great deal of uncertainty so far as the stand of the Liberal party is concerned. I think that was precisely illustrated in the rather humorous situation which occurred in this house during the debate on the throne speech last fall. We had the Conservatives describing the throne speech as an example of "socialism in a silk hat" on the one hand, and on the other we had the C.C.F. party describing the policies of the Liberal government as "reactionary capitalism". There seemed to be a very wide diversity in the interpretation of the same throne speech, which I feel resulted from the studied vagueness adopted by the Liberal party in order to survive under rapidly changing world conditions.

I would like to sum up this point by stating that the success of the Liberal party as a political chameleon is demonstrated by the different approaches adopted by the party in various parts of Canada. In Quebec the party is conservative; in Ontario it is protectionist, witness Bill No. 29; and in the west, and also in the maritimes, it is free trade.

I was very much interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) this afternoon in regard to the basic liberalism of his party. Perhaps his views on the