

There is a difference of opinion even among the Liberals themselves. All the supporters of the government whom I have heard acclaiming this prosperity utterly fail to point out exactly where it is to be found. In dealing with this question we find the same old principle of criticism to-day that prevailed yesterday and that I suppose will continue forever; that is, the criticism varies according to the province. The Liberal opposition in Ontario and the Liberal opposition in Nova Scotia deny that there is any prosperity. In Nova Scotia we have a Conservative government—a good government, a government that has been in power for three years and in that time has done more than the preceding Grit governments did in thirty years to develop the resources of the province and to undo the evils created by their predecessors in office. While the Rhodes government claims some little credit for whatever prosperity may exist in the province, the Liberals of Nova Scotia deny that there is any such prosperity. To illustrate the point I am making, I propose to quote two editorials from the leading Grit newspaper in Nova Scotia, the Halifax Morning Chronicle. The first editorial is from the issue of Saturday, March 2, 1929—the day after the Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) delivered his budget speech. It is couched in the usual laudatory terms and indicates clearly that it was written before the speech was ever delivered. It is made up of the usual political generalities that every person must employ when getting the obituary ready before the corpse is cold. This is the editorial:

The sixth budget presented to the House of Commons by the present Minister of Finance was like those which preceded it, a distinctly Liberal budget. It was also a typical Robb budget—in the substance of its contents, in its concise and luminous presentation of facts, in the clear and comprehensive analysis of the national balance sheet, and the evidence it bore of prudent administration and sound financing. Mr. Robb is rivalling the reputation established by his great predecessor in office, Hon. W. S. Fielding, in his management of the public purse to produce recurring surpluses from year to year.

The Minister of Finance in his lucid and businesslike survey of the year's operations was able to tell a glowing story of the rising tide of prosperity, of employment at a high level, of industries busily producing products for home consumption, and for foreign markets, of expanding trade with the world, of buoyant revenues, of a balanced budget, of a large surplus, of continued reduction in the national debt, of a decrease in the annual interest charges, and the prospect of sustained and enterprising development of the great resources of the Dominion which warranted optimism and confidence for the future of the country.

An hon. MEMBER: That is the stuff.

Mr. MacDONALD (Cape Breton): Yes, it must be very gratifying indeed to the Minister of Finance. But that editorial bears all the earmarks of having been prepared long before the minister introduced his budget. A few days later, on Tuesday, March 19, 1929, the same paper contained an editorial on the question of prosperity claimed by the Rhodes government. The provincial government took credit to itself for having contributed a little towards creating prosperity in Nova Scotia, and the Morning Chronicle promptly took the government to task in these words:

The attention of the legislature has been drawn to economic conditions in Nova Scotia as they to-day exist. It has been pointed out that the much-talked-of prosperity, in so far as this province is concerned, is confined mainly to those centres where there has been large spending of public moneys, or where certain subventions have been granted to certain industries. In other words it has been stimulated by artificial means.

There is no tendency anywhere to discount these aids, but it is another matter altogether on the strength of these to assert that those engaged in the basic industries and dependent entirely on their own efforts for success are at the flood-tide of prosperity. The country knows this is simply not true. One member stated that fifty per cent of the farms were going behind, twenty-five per cent were standing still, while the remaining twenty-five per cent were making progress because of their better location.

Now I ask seriously, is this country prosperous? Is this statement about the rising tide of prosperity justified? I have listened with interest while hon. members on the opposite side have quoted statistics to show our steady growth of imports and exports; I have listened carefully while they quoted the glowing annual statements of our chartered banks and other financial institutions; I have also noted the impressive figures they presented to the house dealing with car loadings and railway earnings. All this is probably true. The imports and exports may be at a figure hitherto never reached; the bank clearings may be above all previous records; car loadings and all other evidences may be there. And yet I venture to say that seven or eight out of every ten men in this country are poorer to-day than they were twelve months ago. I will illustrate that by an actual happening in my own county. We have there the leading industry in eastern Canada. The Dominion Iron and Steel Company, formed some thirty odd years ago through the assistance of the Liberal government here, has fallen upon evil days on account of the actions of the present government. Up to 1921 and 1922 this industry was able to get along. Since that time this government has been stripping it item by