

*The Address—Mr. Berger*

expressed itself in a non-confidence motion—which was, rejected however, even if only by a narrow margin—we are glad to find that despite the coming into force of an already existing law levying a tax on building materials, construction itself has made great strides bearing out last year's forecasts by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon).

I like neither taxes nor dues, Mr. Speaker. Who does? But the fact remains, however, that if we wish to honour our commitments, to meet urgent needs and the constantly increasing demands in the economic, cultural, as well as social security fields, without resorting to the magic formula put forth by our friends in the corner of the house, a formula which no country in the world dared try up to now, even the anti-capitalistic countries, we shall, unfortunately, have to continue levying taxes and dues.

What is especially important however, is to make good use of those friends, as well as a fair and equitable redistribution. Quite frankly, I admit that even if the monetary blood letting seems a bit painful at times, I, nevertheless, will continue to support the Minister of Finance, and to have confidence in him, but I wish to tell him right now that when the operation becomes unbearable, I will let him know in no uncertain terms.

I would be remiss if I refrained from referring to one of the main economic difficulties we are facing in the area in which I am interested, and that is in the alarming situation of our shipbuilding industry. Judging from representations made to Ottawa from Vancouver following our own, we can say that the problem extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

I feel that the present government should give serious consideration to the matter, while looking into our present and future potentialities, and into our import and export trade. It should also bear in mind, more than ever, the needs of our merchant marine and take what ever measures are necessary to provide for its development which has become urgent.

And in support of my arguments, may I quote an extract from—

[Text]

I should like to refer to a newsletter issued by the department of economic development of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce dated February 1964:

It would be a very useful thing indeed if we were to take time out every once in a while to count our blessings here in this great land of ours. Thanks to a political and economic system which makes us among the freest people in the world, we find ourselves with a per capita wealth second only to the people of the United States. As a people we have more and better medical care and more of the other things in life than people living anywhere else but on the North American continent.

[Mr. Berger.]

**Mr. Winch:** Why did you vote against the amendment last night?

**Mr. Berger:** I will come back to that later if I have time.

Right now we are going through another period of expansion. Last year we had a six per cent increase in our gross national product and there is every indication that in this year our economy will grow at about the same rate.

In a year-end statement, the Minister of Trade and Commerce described 1963 as a year of steady advance during which unemployment was reduced, industrial slack partly taken up, and the payments position improved. Here we are, a tiny part of the world's population—some 19 million people—and yet we enjoy so many of the good things of this world. Obviously, there must be a reason, and obviously, too, we don't have to look any further than the economic and political principles which have guided us up to this time in making effective use of our vast natural resources and in acquiring necessary capital and skills.

Canadians have believed, as have our neighbours to the south, that democracy is a pretty sound system of government and we have been reasonably successful in keeping ourselves, as individuals, informed about the problems and issues of the day and expressing ourselves through our elected representatives. We mustn't ever forget about democracy and our role as individuals. The history of nations has been that, as people have grown wealthy and secure, they have grown apathetic and indifferent to the major problems of the day and left it to a handful of people to manage the affairs of government for them. When that happens, the few take matters into their own hands and the rights and privileges of the many are ignored and forgotten.

We have been successful, too, because we recognize the virtues and values of the economic system of competitive private enterprise. Men have been free to exercise their skills, their ingenuity, their enterprise in the fields which interested them most. As a result, there has been competition and we, as consumers, have benefited.

In the light of what is presently taking place, there is little wonder perhaps that people become a little complacent and say that everything is going so well, let's not rock the boat, let's not worry about it, let things go on as they have been going. Well, the truth is that there are still a number of problems including unemployment and slow economic growth and it would be very foolish of us to believe that prosperity is assured without any effort on our part. The Minister of Trade and Commerce went on to say in his year-end statement that a further substantial broadening of the industrial structure has still to be brought about. He recognized that the economic scene in 1963 was brightened for the fortuitous filip of Russian grain purchases and by increases in government purchases of goods and services. While there is some indication that there will be a continuation of large-scale foreign grain purchases, this may not last forever, and when it is considered too that government purchases have been at the expense of continuing government deficits, then it is obvious that the situation merits our continued study.

That was a statement issued by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for all Canada.

[Translation]

A rich country such as ours from the standpoint of inland and sea-going shipping facilities cannot possibly indulge in the luxury