

acquire facility in the English language, but urge them not to forget their French in the process.

Hon. C. P. BEAUBIEN: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Facility in the two languages is a great advantage, and perhaps one of the factors accounting for Canada's high reputation at international conferences.

There are perhaps many subjects which one with my responsibilities should discuss on an occasion such as this, but which I shall touch upon only briefly today. I realize that the honourable leader opposite would have liked to have more time to deal in some detail with many of the matters that he mentioned. It is to be hoped that later on there will be opportunity to discuss some of these in more detail, and if I hurry over them now it is not because of lack of appreciation of their importance but rather because I do not wish to trespass unduly upon your time.

Let me say here that my honourable friend's criticisms of the government did not strike me as being very serious. As I listened to his remarks I more or less sympathized with him, for I could see that despite his ordinary good judgment and keen appreciation of public matters he was somewhat handicapped by the negative attitude of his party in dominion affairs, and that after all he was only doing the best he could in the circumstances. I know it is customary to denounce controls in theory, and I do not suppose there is an individual in the country who has not been in some way inconvenienced by them. It is easy enough to criticize the administration of the controls, but at this moment when we are emerging from our tremendous war effort and going through an almost unbelievably successful transition from war to peace, there is not a business man in Canada who in his heart of hearts does not believe that one of the outstanding accomplishments of the government has been the controlling of prices in order that there might not be a boom and a collapse such as followed the last war.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: The more a man has been engaged in business, the more he has to be thankful for in that respect. I know that controls are unpopular, that the government has been criticized and ridiculed because of them, but I believe honourable senators will agree that when we get a proper perspective we realize that nothing contributed more to the success of our war effort and to a sound basis for the future success of our country than those very controls.

Business after business and industry after industry in this country can thank their stars that controls were maintained.

My honourable friend opposite says that grain growers cannot get as high prices for wheat as they could get on a free market. People in the lumber business can say the same thing with regard to their products; so can the manufacturers of steel, the manufacturers of farm implements, and so on. Our producers and manufacturers cannot get on the home market as much as if they were permitted to sell all their goods on a free export market. But what would happen if they could do so? There would be a boom for a time, and then a bursting of prices, bringing suffering to many a business and individual. A peculiar corollary of the present situation is that the industry which gets the highest possible prices for its products will be in the most unfortunate position of all if those prices cannot be maintained in the post-war period. The producer whose goods are selling at 50, 100 or 200 per cent above pre-war prices may be temporarily benefited, but the fearful question that must be troubling his mind at this moment is: When these abnormal conditions end, will my business be caught in a crash of falling prices?

There may be some merit to the argument of the honourable leader opposite. I am not such an expert in these matters as he, or the honourable senator who sits beside him, but I do know that in general the controls have been a great accomplishment. It may be that in certain details they have worked a hardship to some people, but by and large they have made a great contribution to the welfare of this country. I am proud to say that the man who as minister was responsible for inaugurating and administering those controls came from Nova Scotia, the Right Honourable J. L. Ilesley. During most of the war he had the unenviable responsibility of financing the country's war effort—which made it necessary to impose heavy taxes—and of administering the controls. No one could have had two more onerous or unpopular tasks—he was ridiculed, criticized and blamed—and now that he has undertaken less onerous duties I wish to pay my humble tribute to his great accomplishments.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: I am sorry to interrupt, but would the honourable leader allow me to ask a question?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Delighted.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: He has spoken in glowing terms of the advantages of controls, but will he be good enough to tell us