

Employment Programs

The rest of the article said that in comparison with last year, the "champion" had been the Bank Canadian National whose assets increased by 60 per cent, followed by the Royal Bank whose assets were 42 per cent higher.

Thus, banks beat their own records. More and more, they pick in the pockets of people, with the results we know. Under the present legislation, indeed, a bank may get 9 per cent interest on \$1,600, while it can loan that amount after a deposit of only \$100 is made in an account. One has to admit that as an investment yield, it is hard to do any better.

There is also at the present time a housing shortage. In my opinion, slums should be cleared and rebuilt. We know that home building is an important factor as far as labour is concerned and that the financing of a house at lower interest rates would promote that sector of our economy.

The government which encourages certain countries by extending to them credit facilities at low interest rates should extend the same facilities to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation which could then meet the requests of customers interested in borrowing at less than 9½ per cent.

In my opinion, a new start in housing construction does not require a miracle. It is merely a question of doing for Canada what we do for other countries. Since the 11 per cent tax on building materials is never charged on products shipped to other countries, I suggest that it be cancelled also in Canada and that instead a 10 per cent discount be granted on all materials sold in this country.

In order to assist this government pull the people out of the present crisis, I feel that there is another area worth considering, and that is our merchant navy.

When one sees that Canada does not own more than two merchant ships, whereas Sweden, with a population comparable with that of Quebec, owns a fleet comprising 1,092 units, one cannot help wondering.

When we know that during the years 1875-1880 our country ranked fourth among those that had a merchant marine, it seems queer to see our lakes and rivers deserted now.

If theoretically I am against royal inquiries, knowing the present condition of our merchant marine I would be in favour of initiating one in order to determine who has stolen our ships from us.

All the countries of the world, even those with less shoreline than Canada, take much pride in building and operating ocean-going cargoes.

Considering that our country has 59,670 miles of shoreline—nearly three times the circumference of the earth, the longest shoreline in the world—and that we have tremendous quantities of oil, grain, paper, wood, ore, asbestos, stone, granite and other merchandise to transport towards the great international markets, I endorse the recommendations by the CNTU as follows:

Build an ocean-going merchant fleet designed to carry at least from 40 to 50 per cent of our exports and imports.

[Mr. Godin.]

Increase subsidies to Canadian shipbuilding so that Canadian shipping companies may order new ships at prices comparable with those they would pay in the United Kingdom.

Adopt legislation favouring in concrete ways Canadian ship-owners, seamen, shipyard workers and all manufacturing industries supplying material and equipment.

Promote replacement of obsolete ships with speedy cargoes that can face foreign competition.

Change the Navigation Act of 1934 to take into account present conditions of sea transport.

Denounce the Commonwealth Navigation Convention (1931) and abolish the extraordinary privileges granted to those countries in order to protect our shipowners against competition from ships carrying the flags of the Commonwealth countries.

Levy a 50 per cent tax on repairs, purchases of ocean-going ships or equipment made in foreign countries, except in cases of emergency.

Restrict exclusively to ships registered and built in Canada and to really Canadian undertakings the use of our coastal and interior waters.

We ask for the immediate construction of a powerful ocean-going merchant fleet, by and for Canadians, to carry at least part of the foreign trade of Canada.

With regard to another matter, there are two quite important groups of Canadians who are neglected: manufacturers of textiles and of shoes.

The government pretends that it just became aware of the situation and in order to improve it a Commission was established. Mr. Speaker, I already doubt its result since if the government had been wiser and more responsible, it would have referred a long time ago to the figures of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and it would have gotten itself acquainted with recommendations contained in briefs presented by executives of the textile industry.

But the government does not care for these briefs, whether they originate from the textile industry or other industries.

I have in hand a letter dated December 12, 1966, addressed to the government by the Canadian Footwear Manufacturers Association. This is what it says:

Herewith a copy of a brief that we addressed to the Canadian Customs Tariffs and Trade Committee in order to inform the members of this Committee of the serious situation in which the footwear industry finds itself now.

This brief is the fifth that we have sent to the Committee since May 15, 1964 and as you can notice, footwear exports are still increasing at an alarming rate.

Since then, this organization has been submitting briefs at a rate of about two each year, nearly always along the same lines, and as early as 1966 it was said that:

Importation of footwear from low-wage countries and Communist states accounted for 47 per cent of our domestic production in 1966.

In order to help the Canadian shoe industry increase the number of jobs instead of reducing them, it is essential that the representatives of our government do not grant any tariff concessions in the trade discussions provided for under the Kennedy plan.

It is realized today that, under the Kennedy plan, some importers have been favoured by certain tariff changes.