

Finally resolution 27 deals with the Peace River outlet. It reads:

Be it resolved that this association urges the construction of a rail outlet to the Pacific coast, for the Peace River district.

These are desirable objectives, no doubt, but none of them involves any reduction in expenditure, and the word "economy" does not appear in this document either.

In his budget criticism the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario used a picturesque phrase. I am sorry he is not in his seat this afternoon, but he told me yesterday afternoon that he had to be in Montreal to-day. He said, as reported at page 3215 of *Hansard*:

Is that the reason no mention of economy was made at the dominion-provincial conference or here in this house? I think it is fair to say that the talk was tax, tax; spend, spend; borrow, borrow, but never save, save.

That is a delightful phrase; but I suggest that it would have been happier if my hon. friend had thought of it when he was elected president of the national Progressive Conservative association, and when these resolutions were being adopted. But of course the conditions were completely different at that time, and perhaps he is to be forgiven for its not having occurred to him under those circumstances.

My only reason for doing this, Mr. Speaker, is to attempt, if I may use a slang phrase, to debunk all this talk about reckless and extravagant expenditures on the part of the government. I can make an assertion as well as the next man, and I say that these charges of extravagance and reckless expenditure are totally unfounded. I go further and say that the fiscal record of this government during the last six years, throughout the period of the war and to-day, will not only compare favourably with any other country in the world, but is better.

Mr. MacNICOL: Does not my hon. friend think that that is a reckless statement?

Mr. DIFENBAKER: The recklessness continues.

Mr. ABBOTT: I think it was Edmund Burke who said that it is not possible to tax and be loved. Perhaps that is true, but I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is possible to tax and be respected for imposing those taxes. I believe that is the position in which the Minister of Finance finds himself to-day. I was struck by a remark which was made to me by a friend of mine in Montreal—and he is also well known to the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario. I met him on the Saturday morning, two days after the budget was brought down, and he said to me: "Well,

judging by some editorial comment that I have seen and some talks that I have had with some of my friends, I am one of the few men who like this budget; but as a man who has bought all the victory bonds he could afford during the last six years I say, thank God we have a minister of finance and a government that is not afraid to tax."

Mr. H. R. ARGUE (Wood Mountain): We have all listened with interest to the able speech presented to the house by the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Abbott). He shines best when he criticizes the Conservative party, because in that criticism he is always right. But in my opinion he does a poor job of substantiating his own case.

Mr. GRAYDON: He did not have a case.

Mr. ARGUE: The minister can rest assured that the members of this group are not going to make the burden of its criticism that there has been much wasteful government expenditure. While no doubt some economies could have been made in different places—I am sure that all members on this side of the house will agree that it might have been possible—nevertheless what the people of Canada need is plenty of expenditures in the right place at the right time.

In my remarks this afternoon I shall attempt to deal in the main with the speech which was ably delivered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley). Throughout his whole speech the minister referred again and again to what he thought were prosperous conditions in Canada to-day. He said he considered Canada more prosperous and further along the road to reemployment and reconversion than we could reasonably have expected last August. He said that we are enjoying a level of employment and prosperity that we had never experienced before in peace time. He then went on to show the main props that are under what prosperity we have at this time. What hon. members are attempting to do is to see that the props under what prosperity we have at this time are sound, secure and likely to be durable, because if they are not durable, then it goes without saying that the prosperity will not last long.

I believe we should attempt to analyse economic conditions in Canada to see if indeed we have prosperity at this time. Certainly if the great masses of the Canadian people are not receiving sufficient incomes to enjoy a high and decent standard of living then the so-called prosperity we have is nothing in which we should take pride. We should attempt to decide in our own minds if government policies are moving in fact toward greater prosperity in the nation.