

and corporations have not always operated for the benefit of the people. Our natural resources have not always been developed and exploited in the interest of the people. Our government has not always functioned for the welfare of the people. In too many cases the people's welfare has been the last consideration. Have we so arranged our system of taxation as to make it fall with the utmost gentleness on the shoulders of toiling bread-winners, so that they may live in frugal comfort and Christian decency? Or have we so arranged it as to crush all hope and initiative out of the lives of many? Is there a great hue and cry when the very government itself wrings \$18-20 million a year in customs duties out of our production? Or when the commercial interests wring more millions out of it in profits on those duties? No, we don't talk about these things — we prefer to talk of budgets and surpluses and foreign exchange, Marshall Plans, and anything and everything but those simple truths that stare us in the face.

I have wondered during the course of this debate, what has been in the minds of our fishermen and other working classes as they heard from speaker after speaker that their country is prosperous, has been prosperous, and will be prosperous. I have thought of the way of life of these men, of their unending struggle against the mounting prices of everything they buy, and the fear which they must entertain of a drop in the prices of what they sell. I have thought of the decades and even centuries of the grim battle they have had to wage with life. Is it supposed, Mr. Chairman, that these people are impressed by all this discussion in terms of millions, all this supposed prosperity of today? \$40 million is roughly the amount being presently wrung out of our production annually — roughly half our whole export trade. But is there any indignant shout in this chamber over these terrible figures? Is there even an exclamation of disgust at this crushing burden placed upon the shoulders of our people? On the contrary, the government's revenue is hailed with delight and cited as evidence to show how prosperous and self-supporting the people are.

In the year 1945, the latest for which we have the figures, 318 companies admitted to the income tax assessor that they had made profits that year amounting to \$17 million. \$17 million of

taxable profits made in this little country by 318 companies in one short year! Is this likewise to be taken as further proof that Newfoundland is prosperous and self-supporting? Can it be this that is meant when we are told that there is not a shadow on the road ahead? Some of us must be excused, sir, if when we hear of all this prosperity, and when we see these figures of big trading profits, some of us must be excused if we ask who has all this prosperity? Who is enjoying it?

True, the government is prosperous, and it cannot be denied that Newfoundland as an official entity, a corporate body, is self-supporting today. It is equally true that a number of individual citizens, and many companies and corporations are prosperous. But does that make Newfoundland prosperous? Does that make the people prosperous? Or are the people poor because of that very prosperity? And yet it is their prosperity, or the lack of it, which makes up our economy. They are the measure of that economy. They are that very economy itself. Their prospects are the prospects of that economy. The trend of what lies ahead of them is the trend of Newfoundland's economy. And what are those prospects? Those trends of today? Little consideration has yet been given to the possibilities which have agitated the minds of many statesmen, economists, manufacturers, financiers and merchants for the past two years, and which are regarded by many as an imminent probability, and by some as a practical certainty. I refer to the possibilities of post-war depression.

The chaotic conditions of world trade today are already plain to be seen. Nearly the whole of Europe lies prostrate in the aftermath of the most devastating war in human history. World statesmen are struggling with hope, but hardly with confidence, to solve problem after problem arising from day to day. And in the offing — we hope the far-distant offing — the grim spectre hovers of a struggle between the rival forces of communism and democracy. We have to depend upon that world for any degree of prosperity, for we are first, last, and all the time an exporting and importing country, and have little or no control over the prices we receive for what we sell, and no control at all over the prices we pay for what we buy. Already we see indications that all is not well. Cracks and rents are beginning to make