

Mr. MacINNIS: I did not ask the hon. member a question. I said I did not understand what he meant. It is just possible that if he took time to answer me I would not, even then, understand what he meant. But that may not be his fault. I admit that the fault may be mine. If, however, it is my fault, I must point out that I am not the only one who feels that way.

I should like now to say a few words respecting the sale of war savings certificates. I am not objecting to the principle of raising war funds in this way. I am convinced that the ultimate objective of the promotion of the sale of those certificates is not, in fact, the raising of funds. I imagine that the purpose is to take money out of ordinary consumptive channels, and under present circumstances that may be desirable. But I do say that those who are pushing the campaign must be very careful, and for several reasons.

I know a great deal of high pressure salesmanship is being used to compel people to buy these certificates, people who cannot afford to buy them, people on low incomes, or whose incomes are already far below the point required to maintain a decent standard of living. I suggest that we are not helping the war effort when we compel such people to subscribe to anything which will lower still further their standard of living.

There is another class of people, wage-earners, who may be receiving incomes which leave a small margin for savings. In some establishments the employees are compelled to subscribe. This applies particularly where the workers are not organized. The management calls in the staff, and they are absolutely forced to subscribe to these war savings certificates. I say that this is wrong. If compulsion is to be applied in the financing of this war, or in the making of loans to conduct the war, then that compulsion should begin with those who have the most. As we need more and more, we may have to take from those who have little. For these reasons I object most strenuously to permitting any employer of labour to bring before him his employees, people who cannot refuse to buy, on peril of dismissal, and telling them they must buy these certificates.

There is still another class, namely, those who for a long period of time have been unemployed. It is admitted that there are such people, because we are told many have found employment since the war began. Those people should not be compelled or even asked to subscribe to or to buy war savings certificates. During their long period of unemployment their household goods, personal goods, clothing and other necessities have been depleted, and they should be allowed a considerable time to make up their requirements.

Mr. GRAYDON: Of course, many of them are anxious to do something.

Mr. MacINNIS: That would be their business; but I am talking about those who are being coerced to do something they do not want to do, and I strenuously object to coercion.

The moment we begin to deal with working people there seems to be an inevitable tendency at the first opportunity to resort to coercion. It is even more striking when we realize that the government shies away from any degree of compulsion when it is dealing with people who have money. Under the National Resources Mobilization Act human beings, most of them members of the working class, have been conscripted, or at least compelled to take periods of military training. Wealth has not been touched—although the act gives equal power to the government to conscript it.

In the financing of this war, employees and other workers should not be called upon each month to give up a certain proportion of their already too meagre wages, while huge sums of money lie idle in the banks of Canada to the credit of individuals.

Speaking on Tuesday, the Minister of Finance said this, as reported at page 824 of *Hansard*:

I pause, Mr. Speaker, to let the meaning of this programme and these amounts sink in. Probably none of us can realize the true significance of passing over to governments on the average half of our individual income; or, to put it another way, devoting half the labour and productive facilities of the country to war and other governmental work. When it is remembered that a large part of our population is now at such a level of living standards that it can bear very little of the increased burdens which Canadians as a whole must bear, the burden on the remaining part of the population becomes recognized as all the more staggering.

I cannot see why the burden placed upon this favoured section of the population should be staggering; that is, if it is not considered already to be staggering on those referred to previously, those who are getting incomes so low that they can be taxed but very little. Under these circumstances I do not think we can have anything approaching equality of sacrifice unless we adopt the proposals which were made the other day by the leader of this group. He suggested that we should establish a maximum income and take everything above that. If a maximum income were established, we would be more or less upon an equal basis. That income would be sufficient to provide the ordinary necessities of life—we would just have to forgo the luxuries. Surely that need not be such a terrible thing for anyone to contemplate.