

Interim Supply

house have been striving for these reductions and for this return of the excess taxation taken from our people for these many years. One person said to me, Now we shall be able to start living again. Another said, I could not sleep last night thinking about it. A third one said, At last we can live decently after all these years.

That, Mr. Chairman, is no exaggeration when you consider the position of many of the people with ordinary incomes in this country. To take by way of a surplus over and above vast expenditures no less than \$50 for every man, woman and child is a tremendous amount of money. In my riding, to have that much extra would mean that the people could not only pay their bills and meet their taxes, but would be able to look after some of those things which we no longer consider to be luxuries but rather to be part of the ordinary amenities of living on the North American continent. But I will take this opportunity of saying that I approve of many of the reductions which the government has made in the taxation on lower incomes, because not only are some people being relieved of taxation but, in place of having a steeply-graded tax on the comparatively small incomes, which discouraged production, there is now a considerable mitigation having regard to the progressive rate of taxation on the lower incomes.

It is my belief that that change in our tax law will have a considerable effect on production; because if one went through the factories of this country one would find that nearly every worker there knew exactly when he emerged from one tax bracket into another where he had to pay a higher rate, and he had his eye in many cases on that break-even point. That fact undoubtedly had an effect upon production. The same thing applies to people in the higher brackets. They felt that there was no use in putting in additional hours of effort beyond the ordinary round of duty, in working overtime or working on holidays if twenty-five per cent or fifty per cent of the reward went to the government.

It is nothing less than fundamental dishonesty to bring down a budget and to have no opportunity of examining it, and to ask for supply. It is contrary to parliamentary practice. We should at least have been given the opportunity of examining the estimates of expenditure. Indeed, it is the only real control which parliament has had over the generations since we have fought for and established a workable parliamentary system, a system of democratic government for our people so that we might govern ourselves in an orderly fashion and not have to resort to the methods either of dictatorship or of force which are prevalent in certain other countries.

Is it that the government is afraid of the public accounts committee which has just been set up? No reason has been given for the strange action of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in asking for dissolution at this time. Indeed we may well wonder if his haste to go to the country is inspired by the fact that business in many places is getting a bit spotty, to say the least. No longer are the reports of businesses and companies the same glowing accounts which we have seen over the last few years. The same thing applies to the producers of our raw materials on the farms, in the mines, and in the forests of our country. No doubt the government have said to themselves that now is the time to go to the country before conditions get bad. Perhaps it is because the condition of subsoil moisture in western Canada is now the poorest it has been in a number of years; and the possibility of a crop less bountiful than we have had in the past will greatly reduce their chance of being re-elected. Or perhaps it is because there is an indication of a grasshopper plague in parts of the west. One does not know what these reasons are and they have not been divulged to this committee. Perhaps of even greater importance is the fact that, as my colleague the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) pointed out the other day, our markets abroad are fast disappearing.

In a country where no less than 37 per cent of the total production must be exported, if we cannot find export markets, markets where we get paid in goods or in money for the materials we send over, we can be sure that this country is not facing a period of prosperity. There has been no answer by the government as to where we shall be able to export our surplus products. Most of the products which we do export are surplus. We cannot begin to consume more than one-third of our wheat, or a mere fraction of our newsprint production and lumber production, or of our base metal production, or of many other items. We must have export markets for these materials if we are to maintain our standard of living, and if we are to pay the workers in those industries and keep any semblance of a high level of business activity.

No doubt great problems are staring the government in the face today. It is no wonder that they wish to go to the people before some of these problems come home to us in all their austerity. But perhaps the chief reason why the government wants to go to the country is that the leader of this party (Mr. Drew) has not only put new ginger into the Progressive Conservatives, but has made a great change in the complexion of this whole house. For confirma-