

a difficult position, he bought these things expecting to be given fair treatment. A little later on, he claimed to me that he had been overcharged, and spoke of one item in particular, that of plaster base, for which he said he had been charged \$42 per thousand. It had been taken off the walls of an air force building and had the usual nail holes and ragged edges which anyone who knows anything about such materials would quite expect. He asked me about the price and I said, "Well, young man, there is something wrong, because the ceiling price on that commodity is \$26 per thousand." I had occasion to inspect the materials, and I had to agree that it did appear as though he had been wrongly charged. So I took up the matter with War Assets Corporation here, asking that a competent inspector and valuator be sent to that job. This was done, and I want to thank the officials of the corporation for giving such prompt attention to this matter. They sent an appraiser, and I am told he was quite competent. He inspected the materials, and found that what had been stated was to a large extent actually true. Just two or three weeks ago I had a letter from this veteran expressing his deep gratitude for having received such favourable consideration. His account was reduced by a total of \$600.

I say, Mr. Speaker, if an adjustment like that can be made in connection with one small lot of material our surplus of \$300,000,000, which is largely accounted for by the sale of surplus war materials, might reasonably be expected to be considerably reduced. To me, this transaction smacks a little of inefficiency. I cannot understand why veterans in particular should be given that kind of treatment. This particular matter was straightened out and adjusted, but this sort of thing may have a definite effect on the actual results as far as our so-called surplus is concerned.

In his budget the minister provided some relief from income tax for those in lower income brackets, and the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario (Mr. Macdonnell) in his able speech, and also again this afternoon the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton), dealt with that phase of the matter in detail. I do not intend to deal with the statistics in this connection, because I believe that can be done more effectively in the discussion on the budget resolutions.

The war has now been over for two years, but the man on the street is far from satisfied when he sees his income tax and all other taxes continuing on a war basis. He states readily that production is rapidly falling off, a condition which he cannot understand. At

the same time he says that food prices are rising with equal rapidity. Many I have talked to say it is just as if the minister had handed them a crust of bread with one hand and taken it away with the other. One chap, speaking in a humorous vein, likened it to the father who paid his child one cent to go to bed, and then took it away from him after he had gone to sleep. That seems to be the general impression of the average man on the street, particularly those who struggled so hard during the years of war. It applies with marked effect in respect of the man who worked for a set salary during the war years, and did not receive any great benefit from war production.

If there is a surplus either in the amount mentioned by the minister, or in a lesser amount—and I am inclined to believe that the lesser amount is more accurate—there has been nothing set aside for those old age pensioners, who have been promised something. Neither was there anything for blind pensioners, or for aged civil servants, many of whom took it on the chin during the war years.

With the advance in the cost of living industrial workers received a cost of living bonus, and rightly so; but not the old age pensioner, the blind pensioners or aged civil servants on retirement. They had to struggle along as best they could.

Only a few days ago there was tabled in the house a return setting out the hundreds of thousands of dollars paid by way of war supplements to many types and classes; and I shall not say "all", because some seemed to be overlooked, mysteriously. For the most part those war supplements were paid to civil servants in this city and elsewhere. I am one who believes that a workman is worthy of his hire, and I do not object to that practice. If a man or woman is worth a certain amount, by all means pay it. But I would point out that certain classes of people have been totally overlooked. I feel, therefore, that perhaps if the government had been a little more fair in the matter there might not have been so much surplus in the minister's hands as he claims.

I turn now to another surplus, one which I cannot understand. The records show that in the past year there was a surplus of \$11 million in the Post Office Department, and that since the outbreak of war a surplus of \$42 million, approximately, is credited to that department. It is true that at one time the minister did authorize a slight reduction in parcel rates to Britain. I claim, however, that he