

*The Budget—Mr. Hansell*

they sit, in reality waiting to hear their economic sentence for the next year.

These citizens have committed no crime. They have not robbed any banks, they have not cheated, and I do not think they have done too much lying—not any more than I have. Yet there they sit, waiting to hear their economic sentence, the sentence for being good citizens. They may not know it, but there they are with a noose around their necks—an imaginary one perhaps, and yet a very real one. It is the noose of taxation and, as they listen to the Minister of Finance, they are actually listening to find out whether that noose is to be tightened a little and choke them a little more, or whether it is to be loosened just a little—not very much, as they cannot afford to loosen it too much. Of course they cannot afford to tighten it too much either, or the patient will die and then, of course, they will not get any taxes at all because dead people pay no taxes. That is how it appears to me.

As I said before five o'clock, these budgets may be of interest to business in the country, but I really wondered what the average person thought about them. I had a request the other day from a friend of mine for a copy of *Hansard* containing the budget speech. So I sent him a complimentary copy with a covering letter telling him that I was very happy to enclose this budget speech but that I was quite sure he would not understand what it was all about. I said it would take him much longer to read than I thought he perhaps at first had anticipated; and that when he got into some of the tables I was quite certain that he would not be able to understand them, as perhaps 99 per cent of members of parliament are unable to understand them.

What is it that the average person is looking for? What is it that the average person is thinking about? I do not believe he is thinking in terms of all sorts of complicated tables, necessary as they may be, coming from the Minister of Finance of this country. What the average person is looking for is the highest possible standard of living in order that he might enjoy life as a free citizen of Canada.

It seems to me that the great objective of the financial policy of the government should be to give the people of Canada the highest standard of living, and yet allow them to remain free to enjoy life to the utmost of our productive capacity. It seems to me that should be a very simple thing, yet somehow or other the government does not seem to be arriving at that ultimate objective. The people look around and recognize that Canada is capable of producing tremendous quantities

of almost everything. They see that Canada's productive capacity is able to give perhaps the highest standard to all citizens in the country. I must be fair in this regard, and I think when times are good we have a reasonably high standard of living. However, it occurs to me that it is a strange state of affairs that times can be good only when the country is going into debt. People want to be free to live and enjoy life in their own way without any interference from dictatorial controls from the top.

We are facing a problem in Canada today. I am not going to take time to speak on the unemployment problem, but there is no question that it exists. The Minister of Trade and Commerce, as well as other officials, have admitted that one of the reasons for our unemployment is that there is overproduction. We in this corner of the house refuse to use that term "overproduction". We claim there is underconsumption. However, ministers have admitted that because there is an abundance of everything—overstocked inventories, I believe, is the phraseology used—therefore we have unemployment and hardship.

To those who sit in this corner of the house the problem is not difficult but, evidently because the government are pursuing a certain financial policy, the problem does appear to them to be difficult. They call their dominion-provincial conferences and make all sorts of plans as to how they are going to deal with this situation, without fundamentally changing their financial policy.

What is the picture? We have a picture here of an abundance of everything that could make life happy and contented and secure. Canada is able to do that, as far as material production is concerned. We have the goods piled up. It does not make any difference what it is. It can be foodstuffs, furniture or clothing. It can be whatever it is that meets the people's needs. There we have it piled up in abundance.

On the other hand what do we find? We find people with incomes that are not adequate to live on. Even those who have fair incomes are obliged to stretch their dollars in order to live. If some of them want to get something that is a little bit beyond their everyday pay envelope, they are obliged to get it on the instalment plan, thus mortgaging their future incomes so they cannot possibly buy future production. Those who are unemployed have no incomes, and those who are employed have not incomes high enough to buy that great volume of goods that Canada is able to produce and does produce.