

to the right hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley), well deserved I am sure, I suggest that the minister should take a year off. It looks to me as though this is the year for his sabbatical leave. During that leave he should subject himself to some refresher courses. It is always recognized that the hard-working professor in the university cannot possibly keep pace with the things that are going on around him, immersed as he is in his studies and experiments and research. He often finds himself in need of a new objective approach to the field in which he is working. In my judgment, the Minister of Finance likewise is much in need of a new objective view of things in Canada. If he should by the merest possible chance take my advice and set out for refresher courses I suggest that he visit the country of Belgium and see what they are doing there to distribute goods.

As the minister possibly knows, for many years Belgium has been the stronghold in Europe of orthodox finance. I am advised on good authority from overseas that within six months of its liberation Belgium had made an astonishing economic recovery. In the light of world conditions she could not be said to be in the doldrums; she was relatively prosperous. The recovery was due in the main to a new financial policy, more particularly to the introduction of debt-free consumer credits. Instead of financing the production of goods for export and instead of having the goods the people need sent to other countries on an "export or die" policy which is so much in vogue throughout the world, the Belgian government is ensuring that the home market is so financed that the people might enjoy the benefits of their own productive capacity.

In order to raise the total purchasing power of the people to equal the total prices of the consumable goods produced and imported, the Belgian government has declared a national dividend to all people who, by their work, directly or indirectly, are contributing to the national wealth. Extra amounts are given for each dependent who is not employed, and also to pensioners. The principle behind the scheme is one of simple justice, which I hold should be recognized by the government of Canada—that wages and ordinary incomes are barely sufficient to enable the people to meet the everyday expenses of living. They are not in the position to replenish their wardrobes, to buy furniture and the household equipment, and new homes which have been destroyed during the war.

The budget was a great disappointment to millions of Canadians. People who, during the long years of the war, worked so willingly and well and who made such great sacrifices as

did the Canadians, expected much more consideration from the government now that the shooting part of the war is over.

I must admit that the budget did provide some relief for taxpayers. I want to congratulate the minister upon providing that farmers and fishermen may average their income for a period of three years for income tax purposes. This, in my judgment, will be hailed with considerable satisfaction by the basic producers of our country in these particular fields.

Corporations also are to benefit considerably under the new schedules. This, too, is to be commended, particularly if it results in an all-out effort by productive corporations to speed the production of consumer goods to meet the demands of the Canadian people.

We must also compliment the minister on his expressed determination to revise and simplify the whole income tax act. Undoubtedly such a move will cut materially the cost of tax compliance.

The general opinion of people across Canada seems to be that the increase in exemptions announced by the minister in his budget speech for individual taxpayers is much less than the great majority of Canadians thought they had reason to expect this year. We had all held out the hope that the government would relieve the Canadian people in a substantial measure from the terrific burden of taxation they have been carrying since the early months of the war. Our hopes received a rude jolt, however, when the minister brought in his budget. The people of Canada also received a rude jolt when they found they could expect no relief at all this year; that the benefits announced would not begin until January 1, 1947. One hears bitter criticism on every hand. People say: "The increased taxes and enhanced prices have dwindled our real incomes to half or less of what they were before the war. We expected the government to announce enough reduction in our burden to arouse enthusiasm amongst us for hard work to produce the great volume of goods and services needed to prevent inflation in Canada and to help to prevent suffering in war-ravaged countries of the world. We are having a terrible time to keep up with the high cost of living, and after all the effort and sacrifices we made to ensure victory in the war, we thought the government would recognize our contribution by lightening our burden."

The minister says that it is still necessary to raise very large amounts of revenue. If one may judge by the commitments the government has made, that may possibly be true. If the minister is absolutely convinced that he