

officers should want to remain in the army, in view of the higher rate of pay they are drawing in addition to dependents' allowances in the case of married men.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue my speech on this same matter but to speak about judges of military courts.

In the opinion of the rank and file in the camps those men have some of the nicest posts in the army, and you may rest assured that the judges want to acquire as much credit as possible by condemning deserters to twenty months, or even more, in order to make a good name for themselves and keep their highly-paid jobs as long as possible.

I again wish to refer to that item from the *Journal* which I mentioned a while ago. I must say a few words about the members of the provost corps who go around in the country to look for deserters and, in 90 per cent of cases, make useless trips at the expense of the Department of National Defence, whose estimates are included in the present budget. We must take into account the fact that most deserters do not have the same education as the majority of members of this house. I beg you to believe that when they deserted the army they were willing to fight for their country, but not for another country where they never lived and which really did not mean anything to them. It is true that they deserted the army, but they would have been willing to fight had their country been threatened.

Mr. Speaker, although I do not yet know much about life in Parliament, I have already made representations several months ago to the appropriate authorities regarding the way they are treated and, later on, I heard that the lot of deserters had been improved. I speak in their behalf again and I beg you to believe that they are not murderers or thieves, and I am convinced that they should receive a reasonable sentence.

Mr. DECHENE: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOIVIN: You are no doubt under the impression that I am going to request an amnesty on their behalf, but I admit, Mr. Speaker, that this would not be practical, because the resolutions passed by the various legions would run counter to my request. I shall voice my personal opinion by stating that the best course to follow, in view of the fact that scarcely one year after the war of 1914-18 we granted full amnesty, I am wondering why the Department of National Defence does not make another concession this time,

by punishing deserters with a 30-day jail sentence. The latter admit that they transgressed the law which had been passed by a majority in this house. So that I may be clearly understood I repeat that they transgressed a law of their land, but that they did not default against their country, because the latter was not threatened. Most of those deserters would submit to the law provided we give them a reasonable punishment and a humane treatment. This would considerably decrease the military estimates which, after all, are connected with this budget. Our people could then resume their pre-war employment and help to insure a sorely needed increase in our industrial and agricultural production. Fair treatment in their case would help production and those men would thereby be enabled to earn their living honourably and pay their fair share of taxes.

It is true that the government has levied heavy taxes on workers during the last six years and I know whereof I speak because I was one of them until June 11 last. I may add that we have accepted those taxes because we knew that they were necessary. The war has ended over a year ago and, now, the working people expect a fair decrease in taxes. You may be sure, Mr. Speaker, that they have done their duty and deserve proper consideration. Allow me, Your Honour, to quote Right Hon. Minister of Finance, whose statement appears in *Hansard* of June 27:

A review of our war finance and of our other economic policies and activities during the war would remind us of many achievements in which Canadians may justly take pride.

This is an excellent excerpt from the budget speech of the Minister of Finance. The credit given to our fellow citizens by the minister is well deserved, especially if we consider that the war not only has caused the sacrifice of the lives of our sons overseas, but has also broken Canadian homes and spoiled the future of thousands of our young men. Going still further, demobilization costs, in the previous budget, that of October 12, 1945, represented a percentage of 83.23 of our total expenses, or the fabulous sum of \$4,418,446,000. I will admit, Mr. Speaker, that our population accepted the budget of 1945-46 realizing that war had ended but a few months previously, but, to-day, war being over for more than a year, it is regrettable that it has been found impossible to reduce the percentage by more than 8 per cent, since it remains at 75.85 per cent. This may be, in part, an explanation of the delay, until next January, in granting the tax deductions.