

Mr. BRADETTE: That is an elaborate question and it would take quite some time to answer it. However I will say this: If you read the British North America Act, the federal government can have all the fields of taxation it desires—it is there in plain black and white—but it does not want that. It wants to work in cooperation with the nine provinces in the Canadian federation for the welfare and benefit of the whole nation.

Mr. C. E. JOHNSTON (Bow River): I should like to take this opportunity, as others have done who have spoken in this debate, to congratulate the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) on the splendid manner in which he presented the budget. It is a great honour indeed for so young a minister to have such a tremendous responsibility as the one he carries, namely, being the Minister of Finance for the Dominion of Canada. While I do congratulate him on presenting his budget and while I think he did it in a splendid manner, I cannot agree with the statements outlined in the budget. I am sure that a great many Canadians feel, as I do, greatly disappointed in the budget of 1947. After all, Mr. Speaker, the people were looking forward at this time with great hopes and expectations to a considerable relief from the terrible tax burden which they have carried for so many years. The minister in his statement presented to the house is estimating his revenue this year at \$2,200 million. That is a huge amount. It is true, too, that the total revenues have greatly increased; but, in my opinion, the living standards of the people have not risen according to the production, and therefore the people of Canada have every right to look for greater relief from taxation.

As was pointed out by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) \$2,200 million will have to be collected from in the neighbourhood of 3,000,000 families, making a total tax levy of over \$700 on the average family. The average Canadian family can ill afford that tremendous amount. Not only did the Liberal party themselves do a great deal of boasting about the splendid budget that was brought down, but they were assisted in their efforts by the press across Canada generally. I do not contend for a moment that the press across Canada reflects the opinion of the people of Canada; but for some mysterious reason the press carried in great flashing headlines remarks such as these concerning the budget, "Finance Minister announces \$352 million surplus." On the face of it, that sounds very good and it seems as though the government is doing a tremendously good job of financing. Then again, in one of the Ottawa papers there was the

headline "Income tax slashes well received." I cannot for the life of me imagine where they got that opinion from, unless it was merely from the editorial writers.

That brings me to the point, Mr. Speaker, where I want to refer briefly to the Progressive Conservatives in this house. I was very much interested in the official criticism made by the Progressive Conservative party, and I refer to it in that capacity. I was amazed that there was really no effective criticism, and I am not so much surprised at that, because the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) I think, gave the answer quite clearly yesterday when he was speaking to the house. He went to great lengths to point out that the policy of the Conservative party, ever since Canada was started, was one of raising tariffs and the policy of the Liberal party was always one of lowering tariffs. But the point is this: the Conservatives have been in power, and the Liberals have been in power much longer, but the tariffs have always climbed up.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is a matter of history. I am not saying something that is not a fact.

Mr. GARDINER: You had better check the record.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Liberals have been in power all the time I have been in the house. During a portion of the time there was a war on, but for the last two years there has not been any great reduction in tariff rates that I know of, except in one or two instances.

Mr. KNOWLES: Where it did not make any difference.

Mr. JOHNSTON: And before that the Conservatives were in power. So I say to the Minister of Agriculture and to the Conservatives that it does not make much difference to the country which of the parties is in power. The people always get the dirty end of it anyway.

I want to refer to the criticism made by the Progressive Conservatives and when I say that I do it in a kindly way and just to show that their criticism was ineffective. I wish to refer to the Progressive Conservative amendment to the budget made on May 6, 1947, as reported at page 2805 of *Hansard*, and to read parts of it. I read over very carefully the speech of the financial critic of the opposition in the hope that I might find some place where there was some constructive