

*The Address—Mr. Dupuis*

No matter which of those reasons prevailed, the fact remains that some of those beneficent measures to ensure security to the groups concerned were necessary in this country, first as a duty and then to offset communistic propaganda, as well as the effect its wonderful promises might have had on the masses.

Workers do not have the advantage of putting aside the money which might help them go through with the least difficulty, those periods of trial and want which, unfortunately, are much too often experienced by the mass of wage-earners. All those social laws will help them and the old age pension will make them secure from destitution when they are old.

I associate myself with the remarks uttered by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) in his talk of November 13 last. I quote:

No fear is more tyrannical than that of want in one's old age. The government's policy is intended to guarantee that Canadians, when they advance in age, may count upon independence and a decent standard of living and not upon charity and the old people's home.

During the last session, the government decided to lower to sixty-five years the age at which a person may be eligible for the old age pension. It has also increased the amount of the monthly pension paid old age pensioners, thus increasing the measure of security which this legislation provides. It is an annuity which will guarantee them comfort and independence when they reach the twilight of life.

Unavoidably, it was necessary to increase taxes, but I believe that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) deserves congratulations for having distributed so equitably the taxes required to grant those additional benefits to our senior citizens.

Since I am dealing with the Department of Finance, I deem it my duty to present a few suggestions which I believe should be adopted.

It has seemed advisable to impose an excise tax on various articles, the so-called luxury goods, like radios, washing machines, refrigerators, etc. A very burdensome tax has been added also to the price of tobacco.

I understand that very heavy sacrifices are made necessary by the extraordinarily high cost of rearmament. All the parties recognize how imperative it is to establish our defence on a sound basis. However, some members of the opposition seem to think that we are not doing enough in that connection.

[Mr. Dupuis.]

If we decided to follow their suggestions, I wonder how many millions we would have to add to our national revenue, millions which would have to be levied by taxation!

Those who blame the government for not doing more in connection with our defence situation and recruiting for the various armed services take great care not to suggest some beautiful source where we might obtain such huge additional amounts as would be involved.

While I approve the government's policy as far as the amounts allotted to our defence production are concerned I think that there should be a better distribution of the taxes necessary to meet the emergency.

Reverting to the increased excise tax on the articles I have already mentioned, I wonder who, after due consideration, could seriously claim that an electric washing machine or refrigerator, or even a radio, are luxuries.

Are there some who would like us to go backward by raising the price of washing machines through taxation to such a prohibitive level that only well-to-do people could buy them while those who are not as fortunate would have to do without them?

Certainly, no one would like to go back to the times when the housewife was practically a slave and forced to labour hard without the help of those household machines and appliances which progress has placed at her disposal in the last fifty years.

It is imperative that we should contribute to the comfort and the well-being of the housewife; one of the best means to help her is to facilitate the purchase of all the appliances necessary for this purpose. It is not by increasing taxes and curtailing installment buying facilities that we will reach this end.

Thus, electrical refrigerators contribute to the well-being to which everyone has the right to look forward to.

Some may claim that people can always use an ordinary ice-box, the cost of which is within everyone's reach. Even if this is true, one may wonder whether it is very much more economical to use natural ice than an electric refrigerator. Have we figured out the enormous quantities of food that are saved through the modern methods of electric refrigeration? I should add that this invention and the health conditions it creates help