

Just what does that mean? This appeal board will go to work on assessments for the year 1946, and subsequent years. We may be sure this suggestion was not brought forward by the Minister of Finance until there had been a great deal of criticism of the existing procedure, an outcry from outraged taxpayers throughout the length and breadth of this country. The generality of taxpayers have been crying for years for some reform of the present procedure in connection with assessment and collection. But let us see how far this proposal goes. It begins with the 1946 assessment. Well, Mr. Speaker, you will make out your return on your 1946 income—and I hope it will be substantial—in April, 1947. If the slow-motion procedure now in full flower in the Department of National Revenue continues to flourish, assessments on the returns made in 1947 on 1946 income will probably begin to be issued in 1950. So that this appeal board will begin to go to work about 1950, or perhaps 1951. I am sure the taxpayers of this country will be grateful to the Minister of Finance for coming to their rescue with such a timely measure!

As the minister well knows, there has been strong criticism about the multiplicity of discretionary powers vested in the Minister of National Revenue under the Income War Tax Act and the Excess Profits Tax Act. As a matter of fact, if hon. members have perused the report of the special committee appointed in the other place (the senate) to review the workings of the Income War Tax Act and the Excess Profits Tax Act—and I hope they have, because they will find it a most interesting and valuable document—they will find at page 386 that the committee catalogues the discretionary powers vested in the minister under those two acts. The figures as I add them up total eighty-eight under the Income War Tax Act and twenty-four under the Excess Profits Tax Act.

These discretionary powers cover a variety of subjects, such as the allowance of reserves; limitation of expenses; determination of the true nature of transactions where lessening of tax may be involved with reference to companies and individuals; determination of the nature of income; determining the nature and effect of certain legal documents and reciprocal acts; approval of pension schemes; minor administrative discretions; regulations to carry the act into effect; waiving of penalties; determination of standard profits; adjustment of standard profits, and references to board of referees in the case of new or substantially different business.

The Minister of Finance offers, as an answer to this injustice, one which is crying for reform, a recommendation for an income tax advisory

[Mr. Fleming.]

board. It will be recalled that the committee appointed in the other place recommended that those discretionary powers should not be final and absolute in the hands of the minister, but that there should be an appeal from them.

The officials of the department came before the committee and said, "No, we are opposed to that." The committee in the other place was not overcome by that opposition, and still made its recommendation. Of course, when it got to the department and the officials set to work advising the minister, hon. members will know what happened. Hon. members know what would always happen under those circumstances, with the present government in office. The officials won out, of course.

So we have the situation wherein the income tax advisory board is to have power only to advise the minister; and the minister in turn retains full power either to accept or reject that advice. In the second place, there is no appeal from the exercise of any discretionary powers. In the third place, there is not the slightest reduction in the number of discretionary powers; they continue in full number.

Mr. Speaker, my time has expired. I had hoped to touch upon dominion-provincial relations, but time does not permit. In closing let me add this thought. This is not the kind of budget the people of Canada had been led by the government to expect, in the light of the lavish promises the government made. In the second place, it is not the kind of budget the people of this country deserve, after the sacrifices they made in the war years. In the third place, it is not the kind of budget which will help the people of this country to carry on, to expand production, to increase employment and to convert to peacetime economy. Lastly, it is not the kind of budget the people of this country will approve. Indeed, in the light of this budget, so far as the taxpayer is concerned, the war is still on.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

### After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

### PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. RALPH MAYBANK (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I move that bills Nos. 254 to 298 inclusive be now read a second time.

Mr. J. W. BURTON (Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, it is not my intention to delay the second reading of these bills unduly, particularly in view of the fact that on a number of occasions both this session and in previous sessions serious objections have been raised