

*Special War Revenue Act*

Mr. ANDERSON: How often are the payments made?

Mr. WARNER: Daily as the cream is delivered. The average payments, as near as we can get at them, run a little less than fifty per cent under five dollars. Straight taxation is all right, provided it is fair, but I take it that the figures I have given are proof enough that it is grossly unfair not to raise the minimum to ten dollars. However, I am glad the minister is willing to put the minimum even at five dollars, and I only hope that he will go further and meet our views. I am talking of the creamery business from personal knowledge, and I know that we as members of parliament cannot afford to put any extra burden on a business that is carried on in this way, that is, it issues more cheques for amounts up to ten dollars than any other business of which I have knowledge. We want to encourage rather than discourage the creamery business, and I believe every creamery man is willing to carry on his business in a fair way and to stamp everything over ten dollars. Anyone acquainted with the dairy business would have no trouble in understanding the unfairness of not raising the minimum to ten dollars.

Now I want to refer to a matter brought up by my friend from Mackenzie (Mr. Campbell). I believe that our people in the country would not dodge the tax if every fifty dollars had to bear its share of stamp taxation. This would permit the minister to raise the minimum to ten dollars. I had intended to

move an amendment to increase

10 p.m. the minimum to ten dollars, but the minister having committed

himself to the principle of exempting small cheques to the amount of five dollars, I rather hesitate to push my amendment. I sympathize with him in trying to get all the revenue he can for the country, but I do not believe he would lose much by acceding to our request. I believe yet that these creamery men will have to change their system of business. I think this is too heavy a tax, and that they cannot stand it. They will probably have to change their system to paying once a month or every two weeks. That would be a backward step, both depriving the farmer of the money for his daily expenses, and perhaps setting back the quality of butter a good deal. The farmers would not blame the creamery men, because the creamery men could not avoid it; they would blame the government. I do not think the government is going to get the revenue out of this tax they expect, because the creamery men will have to change their system, and that will

[Mr. Warner.]

mean less revenue for the government, and also discredit as well. I would ask the minister therefore to seriously consider whether he cannot raise the exemption to ten dollars rather than five.

Mr. FORKE: I only want to say a few words in connection with this matter. Who pays the taxes?

Some hon. MEMBERS: What about the stamp tax?

Mr. FORKE: I listened with a good deal of attention to the remarks made by one of the members from Toronto. I think these gentlemen want to be fair. I really think that in making attacks on members in this part of the House and suggesting that the farmers are evading their taxes they do not mean to be unfair, but I want to call the attention of the House to the situation as we find it to-day. I can only speak for the western provinces; I do not know much about Ontario and Quebec. I have been a farmer all my life nearly, and have been used to handling small amounts of money. I do not know what it is to handle thousands and thousands of dollars, although I have handled some money in my time. At the same time I have paid some income tax. I do not like to speak in this personal way, Mr. Chairman, but one seems to be more easily understood when speaking from one's own experience. I want to tell hon. gentlemen in this House that I will be happy any year to pay income tax, and I would ask hon. gentlemen to my right, how can the farmers pay income tax if they do not make an income large enough to be liable to taxation? I see statements in the newspapers and have heard it stated at public meetings that the farmers are not paying their share of the taxes, and I have no doubt the men who make these statements think they are speaking correctly, but as a matter of fact the farmers for a great many years have not been in a position to pay income tax, but have been rapidly going in the hole. Those are the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

I know conditions in the western provinces; I know the conditions of the western farmer, and when I think of those homes and of the women milking cows and striving and struggling just to get the bare means of subsistence, and then when I come into the cities and see cars worth three and four and five thousand dollars and the evidences of wealth everywhere, it makes me indignant to hear hon. gentlemen get up and attack the farmer for not paying his share of the taxes. I am not playing politics; I have no intention of