

be left for decision to Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, or the Hon. T. A. Crerar. I make this further point: The Canadian parliament did not decide that question, or the government of Canada either. A message was sent to the British government, and they replied that they thought there was no necessity to call parliament together. Now then, in the ultimate analysis it was neither the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) nor his government, nor the hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Crerar), but the British government that decided whether the Canadian people should have the right to say whether we would back up Great Britain in her foreign policy. I am not supporting any party in reference to this matter, but I assert that the people of Canada, through their representatives assembled in parliament, have the sole right to decide a question of such magnitude and of so much importance to the peace of the world.

In regard to the conditions now prevailing in this country, I notice that one hon. member speaking yesterday said:

I hope that when legislation is brought forward the legislators will see to it that it does not enhance the price of the commodities representing the necessities of the common people.

That is a very good statement, I think it is well worth commendation from this side of the House, and I would commend it most heartily to the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) when he brings in his budget. He is the person to whom we should commend that statement—not to hon. members, but to the master hand, to the minister who brings down the annual budget. In that connection, when he is speaking of the necessities of life, I would ask him to remember that he increased the burden upon the common people last year by fifty per cent through the sales tax. We would commend to his consideration the necessity of seeing that not only monopolists, not only combines and other predatory organizations, but this government itself do not enhance the price of the commodities which we all have to buy to feed and clothe ourselves. Why, it is becoming almost impossible for a family man to supply all the needs of his family. We know that no matter how you try to tax those higher up, as one member said in the Imperial parliament the other day, in the last analysis the tax is passed on from one person to another until it rests on the ultimate consumer. I believe it is the same in Canada. You may say that the capitalists, the manufacturers and the upper classes are paying the bulk of our taxes, but in the final analysis it is always the common people

who are bearing the heaviest burden of taxation,—a burden which is driving them out of the country.

In regard to the stamp tax, although some men think it is an excellent thing, I have nothing to say about the tax itself; I shall confine my remarks to the manner in which it is collected. This year we find there has been an increase in the sale of stamps. When you buy a war tax or an excise tax stamp you know that you are paying a specific tax the aggregate return from which will be earmarked; when you buy a stamp and place it on a cheque you know it is going to help reduce the war debt, but in the great majority of instances you may affix an ordinary postage stamp. A banker told me some time ago that at least eight cheques out of every ten that passed through his hands did not bear the proper revenue stamp at all but merely a postage stamp. No wonder the hon. Minister of the Post Office Department can show a surplus this year in place of the deficits of former years. I believe that if a stamp is to be placed on cheques and other documents a special stamp should be provided, so that the returns from that particular tax can be ascertained.

Now, as to economy. We have been told that it is almost impossible to have economy in our public expenditures. The Minister of Finance spoke yesterday to that effect, and other hon. members from the Maritime provinces adopted the same tone. But their arguments were fallacious. They said that it does not make any difference how much we expend as long as we have assets—as long as our natural resources enable us to show a balance on the right side of the ledger. But is that true economy? In the final analysis this heavy burden of a great national debt is placed upon the people and must be met by taxation, not by our natural resources. Although Great Britain has a far greater war debt per capita than we have, she is living within her income, and not only is she meeting current expenditure, but she is reducing that expenditure day by day and setting aside substantial sums in reduction of the national debt. We find that the great nation to the south of us is following a similar course. Therefore I am not the least bit surprised that the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Shaw) should move an amendment to the amendment that economy is necessary in the administration of our national affairs. It does seem to me that if the Liberal party is going to live up to the tradition that it stands not for the welfare of one particular class but of all the people, the government will see to