

and helping to bear the burden. We know also that we do not expect—and anyone would be foolish to expect—that in the immediate post-war period, or even in the years to come, we can get back to what one might call the normal payment of taxes that we had before 1939. It would be ridiculous for us to expect such a thing. We know that during the war children's allowances were granted to the people of this country and that it cost \$245 million more than we were paying in 1939. We also know that the net debt of this country increased from \$3 billion to \$13 billion, in round figures. The interest on this \$10 billion must be paid, and it has increased the interest debt of the country somewhere between \$300 and \$400 million. We all realize these things. We also realize that of the thousands of men who came back, many were wounded, many required hospitalization and pensions which the government must pay for years to come and which will require many millions of dollars. But in spite of all these things I submit that we should not today be paying \$5 where it cost us only \$1 before the war. I say that in spite of all these expenditures that I have mentioned. I think that the people will say that there is gross extravagance on the part of any government which requires them to do this.

What I am about to say may seem like going from the sublime to the ridiculous, but some hon. members on this side of the house have mentioned the nuisance taxes. I come from a small town in New Brunswick. One of our chief industries is the manufacture of soft drinks. I receive many letters from people in my own community and nearby asking that the tax on soft drinks be reduced. I say to the government, surely with all the millions of dollars we collected, this tax on soft drinks could have been taken away and the children given the opportunity to buy their "pop" without paying two or three extra cents a bottle for it. The same thing applies to candy bars. We have often heard the expression that it is "like taking candy from a kid." Well, the government today has placed itself in the position of depriving the children of candy or taking candy from children due to the tax on candy bars.

Another point to which I should like to refer is the \$250 which is taken off the exemption on income tax of a married man if his wife goes out to work. I know in my own province—and the situation is the same in many parts of Canada—we have many married teachers and nurses who assist in the family budget. We know that there is a great scarcity of teachers all across Canada.

[Mr. Brooks.]

We know that there is a great scarcity of nurses. It would seem to me that if the government had the interest of the people at heart they would have done away with this \$250 charge and allowed married women in these professions and in others as well to carry on.

I should like to say a few words about veterans affairs. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Mackenzie) on the decision he made a few days ago to permit a student pensioner attending university to receive his full allowance. It was a just and fair act. As the minister knows, many of us in the veterans committee last year took that very stand. I am glad that the minister has at last done away with this injustice; but I should also like to call the attention of the house to the fact that last year \$667 million were voted for veterans affairs. The amount expended was \$607 million. Therefore there was a saving of \$60 million on the veterans affairs estimates. When I read this it seemed to me that we were saving money at the expense of the veterans. I do not think anyone wishes that we should save money at the expense of these men.

I should like to mention to the minister some other matters which have been pressed very strongly and which I believe are just as important as the giving of the full allowances to students. One is the raising of the basic rate of pension. When I point out again, as I have pointed out before, that the rate of pension in Canada has not increased since 1920, you will realize the difficulty that pensioners are having in order to live on what seems now a very meagre amount. One reason why the pension has not been increased, it has been said, is that since 1920 the cost of living has not risen in Canada. I believe the Department of Labour has so stated. I do not think there are many people in Canada today who will agree that the cost of living has not greatly increased since the year 1920.

But there is another point. The standard of living of the Canadian people has risen considerably since 1920, and on the basis of that standard of living alone the pensioners should have a much higher basic pension than they receive today. Recognizing this fact, in the United States they have increased the basic rate of pension 20 per cent within the last year.

I would also point out to the minister that the widows and children of pensioners receive what I would call scant treatment. If we consider the present rates of pension payable, the widow with children has an entirely