

The government is fearful to move forward and ashamed to turn back. I do not know how my hon. friend can laugh. Canada is not laughing with him; the boys overseas are not laughing with him.

Mr. CRERAR: I am afraid they are laughing at the hon. member, though.

Mr. ROWE: To-day, Mr. Speaker, 75,000 of these men stand at ease without a mission, while the government adds another \$150 million per year to the taxpayers' burden. Indeed, they are not as useful here in Canada for an all-out war effort as the lost legion which my hon. friends refuse to seek, or the forty-nine thousand and one men whom they admit they cannot find. The folly of building such a defence force at home while our allies fight the enemy three thousand miles away is recognized by all. Indeed, the school children are talking about it. They are not needed here to win over there. Surely when our best men are dying for our freedom we can take our people into our confidence and view the reality of things as they are. Let us tell the people the truth. Let the government say why they are exercising the policy of conscripting men from useful toil and withholding the power to direct them for the purpose for which they are required. That is the question I leave with the government. They have tampered with it for four years and they might have tampered with it until Britain, the citadel of freedom, had fallen—all for what? Well, Canada will answer, and the people in my hon. smiling friend's riding also, will answer.

The magnitude of the present budget proposals indicates the tremendous tax obligations that must be met by the all too few taxpayers of Canada. It anticipates the ability of the people to pay, and it reflects again the fact that no similar number of people in the world have ever enjoyed such abundant resources. I submit that the taxation forms should be simplified and should more clearly indicate what the taxpayer is required to pay. To-day they are subject to various interpretations. The present tendency towards more complicated systems shows us that we shall rapidly become a nation of bookkeepers unless there is a change in this trend. Parliament is, or rather was, the only constitutional taxing authority; yet in many cases to-day, taxes are not only collected according to the discretion of the minister, but they are fixed by the decision of departmental officials far removed from the house. Such bureaucratic taxation must not become a part of our democratic system.

To-day, after five years of war, many companies do not know where they stand. The

[Mr. Rowe.]

annual financial returns of shareholders must state, "amount of taxes cannot yet be determined." In view of the government's failure to simplify the taxation forms, I recommend that a thorough investigation be made to devise methods of reducing the national waste of labour and time in the preparation of income tax returns. To-day few people understand them, and they have grown to be a burden to the government as well as to the taxpayers.

Our complicated tax structure is a serious problem, and the unsatisfactory state of affairs that arises in its administration is equally disturbing. The treasury seems to have developed a bureaucratic attitude towards the nation's producers, and an unwarranted lack of confidence in the common taxpayer's integrity. The purpose of our taxes to-day might well be said to be twofold. The first is to raise needed revenue, and the second is to prevent inflation by restricting purchasing power. The spirit of tax collection to-day seems to be the extraction of as much as possible for the immediate requirements of the treasury, with a reckless disregard for the expansion, employment and survival of industry.

In the interests of our longer-term economy, there is a limit to the extent to which taxation can be carried. Canada's debt to-day is about \$11 billion. The carrying charges of this, and added war requirements, plus a long list of new social services that are proposed, constitute an unprecedented challenge to our people and our resources which can only be met by the soundest utilization of every potentiality of this nation. However, our task must be to win the war. Before considering a general modification of the tax structure, to preserve our ability to produce, we must meet the war emergencies.

Our first task, I say is, to win the war. We must look to the future. The minister has told us that the present critical man-power shortage is seriously aggravated by absenteeism and refusal to work overtime. I submit that the present budget offers no effective solution to this problem. Now that the war has reached its most critical stage and every ounce of our energy must be mobilized behind our fighting men, the basis of taxation of the industrial worker should be on the standard weekly hours he works, without any tax on overtime for those who are ready to give this much-needed extra service until victory is achieved. If our people are to carry the burden that will remain on their shoulders many years after the war is over, our basic sources of revenue must be preserved and