

*The Budget—Mr. J. A. Ross*

of the dairy producers, principally the cheese producers. The hon. member must have put a lot of study into his speech. He gave us many facts that will be valuable through being in *Hansard*.

We have been hearing many medical members this evening expound on behalf of agriculture, and that is all to the good. I think the hon. member for Regina City (Mr. McCusker) gave us a fine discourse on the South Saskatchewan irrigation project. I have been rather conversant with this matter. I endorse the congratulations he offered to Mr. L. B. Thomson, superintendent of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act administration. I knew this gentleman before I came to Ottawa because it was my privilege to serve on an advisory committee of the P.F.R.A. before coming down here. At that time Mr. Thomson was working in another capacity. I am sure that he will make a splendid head of the department he has now taken over.

Those who have been here for some years will remember the many speeches made by the late John R. MacNicol with regard to the South Saskatchewan irrigation project. The late Mr. MacNicol represented a Toronto riding but hon. members will recall how he used to spend his vacations travelling throughout the country studying our natural resources. He was very keen about this South Saskatchewan project. I have talked with many people from the prairies, especially from Saskatchewan, and irrespective of politics they have told me that they thought the project should be named the John R. MacNicol irrigation project. Those in charge of this matter for the government should take the advice of these residents of the prairies, many of them staunch supporters of the government, who are asking that this tribute be paid to the late Mr. MacNicol.

I realize that it is too much to hope for, that every citizen in Canada would read the speech delivered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott). I compliment the minister upon his manner of delivery. He does his job well. I do not agree with much of the material contained in the budget, but I wish all the citizens of this country would read the detailed speech he delivered. He is a kindly member of this government. Then I wish the same people would read the detailed criticisms which were so well advanced this afternoon by the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell). If all the citizens of this country would read and study both those speeches I think they would get a different understanding of what these tax proposals will mean to them in the days that lie ahead.

I was pleased to hear the hon. member for Greenwood ask the Minister of Finance and the government rather pointedly not to persist in their proposal to increase the sales tax from eight to ten per cent. I have always been greatly opposed to sales taxes of any kind because I do not like indirect or hidden taxes. I think it is an unfair tax. As has been so well pointed out by several speakers this afternoon, by the time this tax is paid by the consumer it has been pyramided until it is several times the original eight per cent, or ten per cent as it is now. It is difficult to estimate what the final tax is after it has been pyramided from the wholesaler right through to the consumer.

It is a vicious type of tax and certainly it will not assist those who are trying to fight the cost of living and finding it most difficult in these times. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Greenwood, the sales tax should be repealed because his surplus will probably be more than the revenue from the increase. Therefore he should withdraw that proposal. In this afternoon's press is an article indicating that the budget has boosted gasoline prices. The article points out that Imperial Oil Limited has decided to increase the prices of gasoline and diesel fuel because of the proposed sales tax increase. I do not think I need tell anyone here that that will add to the cost of production of the farmers of this country, as well as of many other people. That is just one of the items, as already pointed out. I think it would be an unfair increase and an unfair tax.

With respect to the tax of 15 per cent on electric stoves, refrigerators and washing machines, as was pointed out by speakers this afternoon these are now considered necessities of life throughout this country. I am sure that this tax will be very much disliked in the province of Manitoba from which I come because a great hydro expansion is taking place in the rural areas at the present time. After the type of life that our farm people have been accustomed to, and having in mind that these things are now considered necessities of life, the extra 15 per cent tax is going to be rather a hardship on very many people. I think it is most unfair.

The hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) wonders why some additional tax was not imposed on beer or liquor. Personally I am bound to agree with him. I do not think anybody will accuse me of being a crank about these things. However, a letter appeared in a paper the other day written by a bride to be. She was wondering when liquor and beer had become essentials of life and why electrical stoves, refrigerators