

Income Tax—Calgary area farmers

taxpayer buys? Then he was asked, "Have you been buying any fur coats or jewelry?" This would be for his wife, of course. Once more they are trying to pry into all the details of a man's domestic life.

Then, the next question was, "What does it cost you for board?" They want to know what he pays for groceries and so forth, how much it costs. This is another thing that is no business of theirs. Then, he was asked, "How much do you spend on liquor?" I do not know whether the Minister of National Revenue and his minions are turning themselves into agents of the temperance association, but certainly it is none of their business how much liquor a farmer or any other individual buys. I know the minister would resent anyone asking him how much liquor he buys.

Mr. McCann: I never got any from you, anyway.

Mr. Harkness: These officials are demanding that he give the information or he would be arbitrarily assessed for his income tax. They asked, "Have you been on any holiday trips, and how much did they cost?" The writer of the letter goes on:

You can imagine how perplexed one would be to have to depend on memory and to have had no inkling such was expected.

The general situation is this, that a certain limited number of the farmers in the southern half of Alberta, which is in the Calgary income tax district, were dragged in and subjected to these gestapo methods of questioning concerning their private affairs. Then, on the basis of that, as I say, the department goes ahead and establishes the net worth and places an arbitrary assessment on it. No doubt they do the same with a limited number of farmers from other provinces. We have not been able to find that out. That is one answer I did not read from this return. I asked:

Were letters, similar to the one sent to the farmers in the Calgary income tax area, sent out to farmers in all provinces? If so, how many were sent out in each province?

The answer I received was:

They were sent from time to time to make appointments in a nearby town for farmers in the area. Statistics are not available because this was a routine procedure.

It is not very routine when you have 500 farmers in southern Alberta, and no doubt a like number in the northern half of Alberta,

[Mr. Harkness.]

Manitoba and Ontario, subjected to this procedure. It is anything but routine. I would think the first thing the minister should do would be to repudiate these methods and give the house an undertaking that this sort of thing will not be continued at any time in the future.

Mr. Speaker: Is the house ready for the motion?

Mr. Rowe: Is the minister going to answer?

Mr. McCann: I shall answer at the proper time.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Robinson (Simcoe East) in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

84. Departmental administration, \$3,333,583.

Item stands.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

239. To provide for the Canadian forces, the defence research board and other expenditures relating to defence, including contributions toward the military costs of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; to authorize expenditures in the current year out of the amount hereby provided, not exceeding \$300,000,000, under the provisions of section 3 of the Defence Appropriation Act, 1950, and to provide that, notwithstanding subsection 3 of that section, where equipment or supplies acquired by the Canadian forces after March 31, 1950, are transferred, the estimated present value thereof shall, if the governor in council so directs, be credited to this vote instead of being paid into the special account mentioned in the said subsection 3, and when so credited may be expended for the purposes of the Canadian forces; and notwithstanding section 30 of the Financial Administration Act to authorize total commitments for the foregoing purposes of \$4,577,641,724 regardless of the year in which such commitments will come in course of payment (of which it is estimated that \$2,711,822,159 will come due for payment in future years), \$1,865,819,565.

Item stands.

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

247. Departmental administration, \$1,150,272.

Item stands.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND TECHNICAL SURVEYS

210. Departmental administration, \$470,422.

Item stands.

Mr. Harris: Would the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Progress reported.