

Then there are what have been termed the nuisance taxes on soft drinks and chocolate bars for the children. Certainly these should be repealed, and the five-cent rate on soft drinks and chocolate bars should be provided for the children of this country at this time.

Then there is the twenty-five per cent luxury tax on jewellery, and I have always approved a luxury tax. The Minister of Finance was reported in the daily press quite a few months ago as having said that the budget would provide for an adjustment in this tax. That statement at that time was, I think, improper, because it distinctly slowed up business for that type of merchant throughout Canada. These people would certainly approve fewer words and more action from the minister in that respect. I am one of those who think that clocks, flatware, watches and such articles are essential to young people setting up housekeeping and certainly should not be termed luxuries, as they are for the purpose of taxation at this time. I endorse fully the request made by the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. McIvor) that the tax on wedding rings should be repealed.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Hear, hear.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I think that is most essential; and I am especially pleased to have the endorsement of my very good friend, the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Mackenzie). I hope it will have a beneficial effect, because I have certainly noticed many of the fair sex with their eyes on him in the past.

Mr. GREEN: Is that why he has been waiting so long?

Mr. MAYHEW: He will not care if you take up a collection and buy one for him.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): The government should be practising greater economy at this time. I know that the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) replied along those lines today. He gave a set of figures of government employees. I remember speaking on the budget a year ago; in fact, on July 10, 1946, and I used these figures which will be found at page 3314 of *Hansard*:

... in pre-war days there were about 70,000, and during the war the number has increased to approximately 150,000. One year after the termination of the war there has been a decrease of approximately one-half per cent—less than one per cent. Sometimes it is difficult to decide just who are within the civil service and who are in other branches of work under the government today.

The Minister of National Revenue today set forth a number of figures. He stated that in

1939 there were some 52,000; at the end of the war, 142,000; and practically that same figure as of October, 1946. I realize that figures, especially when they are obtained from different government departments, are confusing. I want to refer to a return, sessional paper No. 106F, dated March 27, 1947. The mover was the hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Ross), and his questions were as follows:

1. What is the total number of employees of the government of Canada, including employees of boards, commissions and corporations appointed by the federal authority as of the thirty-first of December, 1946?

2. What is the total amount of salaries, wages and allowances paid to such employees in the month of December, 1946?

Then it says:

The attached information has been received by the Secretary of State of Canada from several departments of the government.

I am not going to burden the house with all these details; they are lengthy. But, Mr. Speaker, these add up to a total of 173,961 employees of the government of Canada as of December 31, 1946.

Mr. McCANN: All the fellows who were shovelling snow for a day or two.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): No; they are not included in this sheet. It is lengthy, and if I had the time I should like to put it on *Hansard*.

Mr. McCANN: All the casual employees.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): The total amount of salaries, wages and allowances paid these employees of the Canadian government for the month of December, 1946, amounted to \$26,462,000; that is for one month. At this rate, for twelve months of the year, it would mean \$317,544,000 annually. I think the people of this country expect some decrease in the number of these employees at this particular time.

It has been set forth that the cost of the Canadian information service under the Department of External Affairs, will, according to the government's own estimate, be \$241,200, for this year. Added to that, each department of the government has its own publicity service at great cost over and above this to the taxpayers. According to another return, dated March 15 last, War Assets Corporation spent some \$210,000 last year just to remodel and alter their office building in Montreal to take care of some of their 7,000 employees.

I am sure that everyone in Canada realizes the deplorable situation with regard to veterans housing from coast to coast in Canada, and the great amount of money