

budgeted for an expenditure of \$190 million; in 1920 the same finance minister, then Sir Thomas White, budgeted for an expenditure of \$620 million; 1925, Mr. Robb, \$342 million; 1930, Mr. Dunning, \$360 million; 1935, Mr. Rhodes, \$351 million; 1940, Mr. Dunning, \$550 million; 1945, Hon. J. L. Ilsley, \$5,152 million, or just ten times as much as the 1940 budget; 1946, Mr. Ilsley, \$4,650 million, and in 1947, \$2,750 million; and for the financial year ending March 31, 1948, our present Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) budgets for an expenditure of \$2,450 million.

These figures give us some idea of the development of Canadian governmental finance since that first budget of \$14 million. They also serve to make more clear the Right Hon. Mr. Ilsley's colossal task and his tremendous achievements. But time keeps rolling on, and the Ilsley mantle, so creditably worn by him, has now fallen unspotted and secure upon the capable shoulders of another man. I have seldom been as proud of any budget speech I have heard as that delivered by the present Minister of Finance in this parliament on the evening of April 29. At the very outset he struck a note of triumph, a note of confidence, a note of achievement, yes, a note of mastery, if you will, and that note he held right through to the finish. As I listened to his words of conviction and his acceptance of the challenge of the future; as I gleaned something of the growth and expansion of this country's business as indicated in the budget figures just quoted. I realized once again how proud I ought to be, and how proud I am, of the privilege of calling myself a Canadian.

Major H. G. L. Strange, a widely known resident of western Canada, prominent in the grain trade and in research, recently returned from seven weeks spent in Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. He has this to say:

The overwhelming impression comes over me that each one of us should utter a daily prayer of thankfulness that we are citizens of Canada with all that this great country has to offer to adults and to the future of our rising generation.

And then Major Strange, rightly or wrongly, goes on to say that hope for the future is almost disappearing in Britain and in the whole of Europe and is being replaced by a feeling of sadness and resignation. These are serious words made by a capable observer, a responsible man, and we may well pause to wonder as to the future.

We all realize that the years as they roll around bring some new experience; there is no doubt about that. During the course of my young life, I have listened to many bud-

gets, some federal, some provincial, some municipal. I have heard finance ministers roundly criticized for having ended the fiscal year with a deficit. But it is a new experience to me to hear a minister criticized for having closed the year with a substantial surplus. I have heard shafts of ridicule showered upon a minister when he announced higher taxes, but again it is a new experience to hear him condemned when he announces lower taxes.

We all know that many a finance minister has had to run the gauntlet of opposition sniping, when he announced an increase in national or provincial debt, but again it is a novel experience to hear a minister roundly denounced when he has made a big reduction in the national debt.

I pause to ask, as I may well do, what is the score anyway? What is back of all this? What is in the minds of those who thus criticize the budget? Are we to assume, as we are compelled to do, that some opposition speakers are in reality saying to the finance minister: You should not have a surplus when we were all primed for you to announce a deficit? Are they saying to the finance minister: You have no right to lower the taxes in this country because we were confident you would have to increase them? And again, is their attitude not equivalent to saying to the finance minister: Why did you reduce the national debt? Why did you not increase the debt, thereby increasing our interest charges and thus compelling us to pay still higher taxes? Surely, Mr. Speaker, some of our opposition friends are beginning to realize the astounding absurdity of their criticisms, because the tone and calibre of many of their speeches do not lend themselves to any other interpretation than that I have just mentioned.

No one resents more than I do the fact that Hitler has compelled me to pay higher taxes. But I am thankful today to be living in a country and among people where we enjoy something—and greatest of all, our freedom—for the taxes we have to pay. It could have been different, for let us not forget that we are paying taxes to ourselves as Canadians and not to any foreign foe. It could have been different, yes, and it very nearly was different. Someone has well remarked how great civilizations of the past, such as Babylon, Crete, Egypt, Greece and Rome "went over the cliff." It is only as we get farther away from the suspense of the war days, only as more war secrets are being revealed, that we begin to realize how narrowly our own nation was saved from going over the cliff.

No, I do not like paying taxes; but when I realize that a large part of the taxes I paid last year was applied to reducing my indebtedness it takes away the sting. The Minister of