

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No; I do not see any concealment about it. If you like, you can raise the income tax in order to do it, and that brings you back to direct taxation, but such a tax would be a direct tax on people with big incomes instead of an additional direct tax on people with small incomes. I would welcome any method of reducing indirect taxation that we have to pay through customs charges. Meanwhile I deplore that this very much appreciated service should have to be paid for by—

Mr. DUNNING: By the people who use it.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Who in many cases are not able to pay it. Take the railways; people use railways, but we are subsidizing those railways to no small extent. Take the canals; people use canals, but they are not paid for exclusively by the people who use them. So on all along the line; all the government services are used by the people or some of the people, but are paid for out of taxation. I cannot see why this particular service should be singled out for the application of the principle that it must be paid for just as it may be used. I do not think the suggestion I have made departs from a practice which has been common in this country for a great many years.

Mr. HOWE: I suggest that my hon. friend is doing a real disservice to the cause of which he has been an advocate in all our committees, in that he would make radio broadcasting a public service administered outside and independent of the parliament of Canada. Radio broadcasting in this country is a corporation in which the listeners are the shareholders. It is compulsory upon those managing the corporation to satisfy their shareholders. Unless the corporation can justify its cost to the people who listen, it should go out of business. But the minute you depend upon grants from the public treasury for that sort of thing, you destroy that responsibility; you have officials administering broadcasting who need not justify their policies to any one. In advocating such a system I do not think the hon. member is doing any service to a cause in which he really believes.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Much that the minister has said would be true also of the Canadian National railway. But what about my first alternative suggestion, the one that I really put forward, which has been overlooked—the tax on tubes? The minister has not answered the proposal. I gave the other as merely a secondary alternative.

Mr. HOWE: A tax on tubes means a tax on the manufacture of tubes. By the time

[Mr. Dunning.]

it reaches the persons who are paying the cost to-day, that tax will be multiplied at least by three, due to the pyramiding of costs from the manufacturer to the retailers' shelves. Therefore, instead of putting a fifty cent tax on the listener—because it is he after all who is the consumer of tubes—you impose a very much higher tax upon him. The question has been explored, but there seems such a tremendous waste in the collection of a tax of that kind that we have had to discard it as entirely impracticable. I might add, however, that the cost of tubes as well as of batteries is now being reviewed by the tariff commission. We have reason to believe that the selling price of both tubes and batteries is higher than it should be, and I have considerable confidence that through the work of the tariff board we may expect a reduction in the cost of this material that will more than offset the fifty cents per set increase in licence fees.

Mr. FINN: I wish to compliment the leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (Mr. Woodsworth). He is becoming more adroit every day he is in the house. He prefaced his remarks by saying that he thought these matters could be better settled in committee, but he saw to it that he put himself on record in Hansard as to where he stood in reference to them all.

An hon. gentleman, who is a member of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition and whose name I cannot at the moment recall, stated that he believed the returned soldier should be the man and the only man to collect the radio licence fee. As far as my constituency is concerned, there are many men who to-day are much poorer and are suffering much more hardship than many returned soldiers who are doing this class of work. I appreciate the services of our returned soldiers. I am prepared to say that I believe those returned soldiers are best off whose bodies were left on the fields of France and Flanders, because they have nothing more in this world to worry about. It may be that the statement in regard to returned soldiers will not be popular with that body; but I am not concerned whether my views are popular with them or any other class of persons so long as I have a conscientious belief in the statements that I make. Where the returned soldier is in want, he should, of course, be given the opportunity; but where there are others who are in more or equal need and are perhaps suffering from circumstances which make their lives and the lives of their families even more unhappy, and who by this means could make a few dollars and bring a little comfort