

Speech from the Throne

Mr. Whicher: Thank God that the great country to the south of us is the United States of America, but in thanking Him let us remember that this situation creates many difficulties too. Last year, the United States had a deficit of \$38 billion and this year they are budgeting for a deficit of \$25 billion. How does one live beside a nation such as this that spends such huge quantities of money, that has ten times our population, and for that matter has a much warmer climate? But in spite of this proximity, we have done a reasonably good job here.

Last autumn, a tax bill was passed in the House of Commons, bitterly opposed by all members of the opposition, which raised the tax exemption from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for single persons and from \$2,000 to \$2,850 for married couples. Not enough, says the opposition, but it is approximately a 50 per cent increase and certainly a step in the right direction. I cannot resist putting the question to my hon. friends to the left: how much did they raise it the last time that they were in office? Not one single nickel.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: But the government did better than this; they gave an additional exemption of \$650 to every taxpayer on reaching the age of 65 as opposed to the exemption of \$500 at the age of 70 which existed previously. Not enough, says the opposition, but how much did my Conservative friends increase it the last time they were in office? Once again, not one single nickel.

For years, many Canadians, particularly young working mothers, have said that there should be some tax exemption for them to allow for a baby sitter or a housekeeper. The then minister of finance answered the challenge, and now up to \$2,000 can be allowed to the working mother. Not enough, the opposition will say, but may I remind them that it is a mighty fine start. Working men and women are being allowed \$150 for clothes and tools used in their particular vocation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Big deal.

Mr. Whicher: Not enough, the opposition says, but again, how much did they allow when they were in government? Once again, not one single nickel.

Many of these good points have not been sold to the people of Canada. There are many more that could be mentioned. Just as an example, I remember the hue and cry that went up from the small businessmen of this nation when it was suggested in the White Paper on Taxation that all corporations would be placed on the same tax basis, whether big or small. This government, rightly so in my opinion, put into tax law percentages that allow the small businessmen to pay only half of what the big corporations pay up to a very reasonable profit figure. It is human nature to dislike any form of taxation, but this government has made our tax laws much fairer than they were in the past. An example of this is the implementation of a capital gains tax for the first time in Canada's history. In my opinion, at least 90 per cent of all Canadians are in favour of this tax, but in spite of this some members of the opposition, in their attempt to gain favour with big business, were opposed to this very fair method of tax-

[Mr. Baldwin.]

tion that has been implemented by every single western nation.

My concluding remarks on this particular subject are that Canadians as a whole owe a great debt of gratitude to the Hon. Edgar Benson,—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1430)

Mr. Whicher:—who took a fantastic amount of criticism without wincing and finally brought forth a fair taxation plan for the citizens of this nation. Mr. Speaker, if the members of the opposition do not think I am right, then let them ask the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who will pay no further taxes, and ask the millions whose taxes are being reduced.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Ever since World War II, the agricultural industry of Canada has not had a square deal. With rising costs, and in many instances reduced prices for the products they produce, farmers have been caught in an economic squeeze that is unreasonable and unbearable. The difficulty was not caused merely by the fact that other segments of the economy had their incomes raised while, on the other hand, farmers in most instances were receiving the same income or, in many instances, less income. I have stated in this chamber previously, and I do so again now, that the agriculture industry in many instances is worse off now than it was when I first entered politics 17 years ago. But, Mr. Speaker, I can truthfully say that I can see a light. It is my honest belief that the agriculture industry, after a long delay, is on the way up.

The beef industry is in great shape, and indeed prices are at a point where a farmer can make a reasonable return on his investment. The dairy industry is in much better shape than it was two years ago. Thanks to a great selling effort by private enterprise, under the direction of the Canadian Dairy Commission, practically all our stocks of powdered milk have been sold. As a result, prices have increased and those engaged in the dairy industry in Canada, while not getting paid as much as they should, are at least making a living.

Let me not minimize the fantastic amount of hard work that our dairy farmers do. Let me emphasize that on each day of every year, including Sundays and holidays, cows have to be milked twice a day. With this as a background, I say to you now that I hope dairy prices will improve, but at the same time I emphasize that the industry as a whole is in much better shape than it was when the government came into power.

Our hog producers, who faced disastrous prices last year because of over-production in the whole of North America, are receiving a subsidy from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) of \$5 for every hog of good quality, up to a maximum of 200 hogs, which will result in \$25 million being put into the pockets of our hog producers. No one deserves it more; the fact is that their plight has been recognized by the government.

A two price system for wheat has been brought into being by the government. This is something that was requested, even demanded, by the wheat producers for many years. It will put an extra \$60 million into the