

applied also to men in the merchant navy, and they are also covered for pensions, not by the Pension Act but by order in council.

We have this situation on the Pacific coast. All of the Canadian Pacific *Empress* boats have been taken over for troopships as well as some of the boats running between Victoria and Vancouver. Just to-day I received a letter from a lady who said:

I personally know of two cases, one a survivor of the *Empress of Asia* and the other an injured member of the crew of one of the other *Empresses*, who soon after their return to Vancouver after serving fourteen months in the war zone received a request for payment of income tax for the year 1941.

She goes on to say:

This is an injustice. These men are as much in the firing line as the navy.

I think that situation should be met by some change in the act. The merchant navy is really the fourth arm.

Mr. ILSLEY: I would not be frank if I said that I would give the matter favourable consideration, because to do so would be entering upon a road the end of which we would never reach. The men in the merchant navy are running terrific risks and giving marvellous service, but I cannot admit that as a reason for income tax exemption. They are not being paid by the crown. We know nothing about their rates of pay, bonuses and things of that kind. They are paid by private employers. The reason given repeatedly in arguments that have been made for exemptions for certain members of the forces has been that we were paying them money to fight for us and that we should not take part of it back. That does not apply at all to members of the merchant navy. If we start assessing degrees of danger and risks assumed by Canadians who are not in the employ of the government at all—

Mr. GREEN: What about the men who will serve on the new merchant ships we are building? Are they not going to be employed by government companies?

Mr. ILSLEY: It may be a government company, but it is still a company. I am simply saying that members should not try to push the government step by step, because that is what it amounts to, right along the line of extending income tax exemptions because they are impressed with the risks or dangers that people are running. I have already told the story to-night of what happened in connection with the exemptions that we did insert in the act contrary to the practice of Great Britain and the United States, and now we are being pushed still further. We have heard

speech after speech to-day urging us to extend exemptions to a great number of officers here in Canada, and now we are being asked to go outside our own armed forces and consider those in private employment or in the employment of corporations on account of the risks they run. Next we shall be asked to extend exemptions to someone else who runs just as much risk, and next perhaps exemption may be sought for people who live on the coast instead of in the interior. That is a road to which there is no end. I may be thought to be lacking in sympathy. I am not at all. I am tremendously impressed, as we all must be, with the splendid service the men of the merchant navy are giving, but let us recognize it in some other way than by shooting our revenue system all full of holes, just causing it to disintegrate.

Mr. GRAYDON: The minister talks about being pushed along step by step. Perhaps my eyes are deceiving me, but if this is the minister I think it is, he has not been pushed very far on matters like this in all the time I have been here in the house, and I give him considerable credit for that. He is one minister who does not get pushed around very much. To-night, however, I think he is feeling a little sorry for himself when he makes the statement he has just made. While I have every sympathy for his position, surely we as members representing the people have a right to bring to the minister's attention the plight of people such as those in the merchant navy, and no matter what the minister may say I do not apologize for raising my voice in this house on their behalf. I am sure the minister would not ask me to do so, and yet that was implied in the remarks he has just made. The minister may not have been impressed by the arguments that have been advanced, and evidently he does not consider them convincing. But at the same time I do not think he should by implication suggest that they are matters which should not be brought to his attention; for the House of Commons is the one place where members can bring before the government grievances, complaints, suggestions and constructive criticism. Perhaps the words the minister used did not express just what was in his mind. I would hope that he would welcome suggestions such as are being made here to-night, and made in good faith, not with the idea at all of making the government retreat in some direction not in the public interest. If the minister is going to retreat on this question, it will be the first retreat I have ever seen him make since I entered the house in 1936.