

Guaranteed Income

his volume entitled *Social Credit*, Major Douglas wrote the following, and I quote:

It seems difficult to deny that society in general taken as an entity and not because of its titles to nature, work or capital would not be the natural heir to it. If ownership of the wealth produced is assigned to the proprietors of the factors which contributed to their production and if the proprietors of the heritage of industrial arts make up society in general it also becomes difficult to deny that the major proprietors and true beneficiaries of the modern system—

Mr. Speaker: I must interrupt the hon. member for a moment simply to remind him that according to the note I have been handed his time is up. However, a review of the situation indicates that he still has nine minutes to go. I apologize to the hon. member for having temporarily interrupted him.

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, I think I started my remarks at around 3:10 and I am entitled to 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker: That is right. I indicated to the hon. member that this information is correct. I apologize to him, he still has nine minutes to go.

Mr. Matte: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I continue:

—the true beneficiaries of the modern system of production happen to be those individuals who make up society as such. To deny the common nature of that heritage would have the effect of setting in motion the process of disintegration of society as we know it.

Major Douglas was then brought to the inevitable conclusion that the equivalent in terms of money of the contribution of those intangible factors, that is the free benefits from association and cultural heritage added to production, must belong to the members of the community in general.

Consequently, when we insist on the need for a universal guaranteed income program, the Social Credit Party of Canada is not satisfied with asking the government to be more generous than it has been up to now. This party contends that the government's current policy deprives people of the fruits of their common heritage and a guaranteed annual income would only give back to people as a whole what they were lawfully entitled to from the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, how can we establish a real guaranteed income program? I believe that we should follow these principles. For such a system to be efficient there are essential conditions to meet. This is important because several suggested programs would spell the downfall of the economy or would merely fail to meet their main object which is to overcome poverty. We consider the following criteria as necessary and essential.

First, the program must provide each individual with adequate food, clothes and housing.

Second, the benefits must be paid on a universal basis in accordance with the principle that these benefits are in fact a heritage to which each member of our society is entitled.

Third, in order to promote rather than discourage personal enterprise and the desire to work, the basic tax exemption should be higher so that the vital minimum will not be taxed.

Fourth, the guaranteed annual income program should be financed not only from taxation revenues, but with new

[Mr. Matte.]

credits according to the real wealth of the nation. This is the answer to the question asked yesterday by the hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde). Thus, instead of contributing to the already crushing burden of the debt, a debt we have no means of paying except by making more debts, the guaranteed annual income will really increase the total purchasing power of the community. It would be insane to finance this program since debts are a mortgage on future income and the community would derive no long term benefit.

● (1530)

Mr. Speaker, each time we put forward such solutions, we are always given the same objections: All right, but where are we going to take the money? We will take the money not only in taxes but in new credit. I see the minister imitating the "dollar machine", Mr. Speaker. That is an old joke, he could find others which are more up to date. When we know that we have all the material and human potential to produce ourselves everything we need to meet our essential needs, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing prevents us therefore from issuing the credits. The minister cannot make me believe that a bridge or a road is built with money, because I have always seen a bridge built with concrete, iron and materials. If these materials are there in abundance, if we have the labour needed to do it, if we have the know-how to design plans, nobody can make me believe we need money. If we need money, it is to keep the wheel going and not the "dollar machine". And to keep the wheel going, Mr. Speaker, we just have to issue the credits we need.

In conclusion I shall simply mention what the guaranteed minimum income should be. In my opinion, the tax exemption for single people should be increased to \$3,000, thus to \$6,000 for a married couple, with an exemption of \$500 for each child.

Our system, Mr. Speaker, would be very simple. I can explain it in a minute, I think. It would be sufficient to give \$300 a year to every Canadian who is 18 or less and \$1500 a year every citizen from 18 to 60. At the age of 60, the person would receive \$250 a month and if married, whatever the age of the spouse, the spouse would receive \$200, which would make \$450 per couple. The amounts are the same for disabled persons: \$250 a month, and \$200 for the spouse if the person is married. For a widow with children, there would be \$250 a month, plus \$500 a year for each child.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the figures I have mentioned, the minister may well say: You speak in terms of billions and billions! We made the calculation ourselves and realized that this program would not require much administration. The question is to know whether the individual is Canadian, still lives and how old he or she is. That is all. Only the case of disabled persons may require a more thorough investigation, but by reducing clerical work to a minimum, the cost of such a program would be only a few billions more than the cost of all the welfare programs we now have in Canada. If, in addition, we apply the basic principle that normally the minimum income should come from our national dividend, which means that we would not be relying exclusively on taxes to grant it, we will be able to establish a system that will make each and every Canadian a truly free citizen who will know that nothing