

PENSIONS

MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): I go back to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Speaker. He knows that, every day, fear and anxiety are mounting amongst the elderly. I am getting calls; we are all getting calls. An Hon. Member behind me, I think, said he is getting calls. Everyone is getting calls. We are all concerned. Everyone is asking me: "What are you going to do about it?" Now I am asking the Minister what he is going to do about it. What is he going to do about correcting this cruel and brutal measure in the Budget?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the first point I make to the Hon. Member is that he, I am sure, does not want to spread fear by using figures which are wrong, and he again used a wrong figure this morning. I think that is the first point we should agree on.

The Hon. Member fobs off the creation of jobs as being meaningless to the elderly. But let's keep in mind that the creation of those jobs, and the reduction of the 29 basis points in the bank rate yesterday, are both examples that the Government's economic plan, along with the co-operation of the private sector, is working.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): I agree with the Hon. Member—I have said many times in the House that I am defending the senior citizens, and this is what I am defending. I do believe that as that new wealth is created and that new room is opened up, those who should first get that benefit are those who are our senior citizens. And that is what this Government has always said.

* * *

[Translation]

THE BUDGET

CONSEQUENCES FOR VARIOUS SOCIAL SECTORS

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance.

I am a little surprised to hear the Government benches congratulating themselves on increased employment and a reduction in unemployment. Any first-year university student knows that it takes at least a year or a year and a half for a Budget to have any effect, and today's figures are the result of the Lalonde Budget.

Mr. Masse: Why not the Mackenzie King Budget?

Mr. Garneau: Despite repeated requests by the Opposition, the Government has refused to disclose the impact this shower of taxes on the Canadian middle class will have on the Canadian economy.

Oral Questions

My question to the Minister of Finance is as follows: At a time when in the United States, there is a proposal for fiscal reform which would increase corporate taxes and reduce taxes for the middle class, why has the Progressive Conservative Government taken an entirely different route by increasing taxes and income tax for the middle class and reducing corporate taxes, especially for the oil multinationals?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is just rehashing old questions which his colleagues in the New Democratic Party have asked, and they have been getting the straight answers. I am not going to bother boring the House with those answers again. However, I do caution the Hon. Member, when he makes these comments about job creation, that since January 75,000 more younger people got jobs, 112,000 women have found jobs since September 4, and 271,000 Canadians in total have found jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The difference, Mr. Speaker, is that we are not saying that we created those jobs. We know that Canadians created those jobs, and that is the nature of the Budget. That is the nature of the economic policy of the Government. It is to give that confidence and encouragement to Canadians so that we can have this clear record of success, about which all Canadians should be rejoicing today. They are not walking around with that little cloud above their heads like the Hon. Member. They are saying that this Government is on the right track. It is reinforcing that clear record of success with the Budget.

[Translation]

RECONCILIATION OF PURCHASING POWER LOSS AND JOB CREATION

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance refuses to understand the question. Since July last year, there has been a constant upward trend in employment. We are afraid that the Budget the Minister has just brought down will stop this trend, and I would ask the Minister of Finance why he is asking the Canadian private sector to create jobs, when he has just cut the purchasing power of the people who are supposed to be the customers of these Canadian businesses, a cut that will total \$37 billion by the end of 1990. I have been asking this question for months, and I have never had a reply. I will try again this morning and ask the Minister where the private sector jobs are going to come from, when he is cutting our purchasing power by \$37 billion.

● (1125)

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Hon. Member to cast his mind back to what his Leader and others in his Party said, that the measures in the