

*Government Orders*

other measures could have been proposed to reduce this extremely alarming deficit that shook the stock market and sent the dollar tumbling.

We in the Bloc Quebecois have proposed several measures to bring down the deficit, including cutting the fat from the federal government. There are hardly any measures in the budget to reduce waste in the federal government.

Would the hon. member agree to help reduce Canada's deficit? Would he agree to set up a parliamentary committee to examine spending and waste in government?

**Mr. Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions. Poverty in this country is a very important issue to me because my riding is among the poorest in the country. In addition, in this budget, we tried to cover these issues of poverty and the deficit. We will ask the finance committee to discuss these questions in detail.

[English]

I think that the balance of trying to deal with questions of poverty, whether it be in Montreal or Winnipeg, is the question that haunts this whole country. This government does not for one minute take lightly the limitations it has in dealing with questions of poverty.

As a former critic on social policy for this caucus in opposition, I know we were very critical of the last government for not addressing questions of poverty. That is why we stabilized equalization payments and why in this particular act we have stabilized the Canada assistance plan. We have moved away from the war against the poor and moved toward supporting initiatives that can help them.

The Minister of Human Resources Development is very active. In fact he participated in a meeting this morning dealing with questions of income security and reforms to unemployment insurance to ensure they do not turn out to be an attack on those who are in need.

The President of the Treasury Board is addressing the questions of waste and the budget not only on an annual basis but I would say on a weekly basis. Great progress is being made to overcome questions of waste in individual programs.

**Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre in terms of the legislation before us.

I have a question for him dealing with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the problems faced by new constables. When they leave Regina, for the first three years of their service as new constables they receive six month pay increments to bring them up to a reasonable level of income. This legislation

not only freezes the level of pay but freezes any increment initiative as well.

• (1220)

Young constables coming out of training are being asked to serve in cities like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. They simply cannot live on their stipend. It is impossible. These are bright, young, interested and aggressive young constables who want to serve their country at a time, I think we would all agree, when the need has never been greater and yet they cannot serve in at least some of these urban areas because of this freeze.

The hon. member will know that when the government changed the unemployment insurance program, which he referred to here, there was some acknowledgement that low income Canadians, particularly those with children, should receive some recognition for the changes in the economic plight that they face. Why would the government not do the same for these new constables?

I know that the commissioner has met with the government on this and has pleaded their case. Could my hon. friend shed some light on why the government at least to this point has not made any announcement that there will be some changes.

**Mr. Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Kamloops for his question.

The broad brushes of the changes and the freezes and the extension of the freeze on public service salaries have obviously been of great hardship to the tens of thousands of people who work for us. It is something we take very seriously. The particular case of the constables is an example of the difficulties in which people find themselves at a particular point in their careers when the next move is out of the question because of some restraints on their compensation package.

I will undertake, as the member has, to raise it with the Treasury Board minister and the Solicitor General to ensure that as the salary freeze on public servants is extended for two more years, as it is in Bill C-17 to obtain the savings that Canadians are looking for, individual cases of hardship are brought to their attention.

**Mr. Jake E. Hooppner (Lisgar—Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, I have a short question for the hon. parliamentary secretary. I listened to the stats on unemployment. I also heard that there are 28,000 people who have given up looking for jobs. This is a big concern in Manitoba, especially on the farm scene.

Coming back from there, realizing what the transportation system is for grain and that the terminal operations cannot go to a seven day cycle to start moving grain faster, would the hon. member look at that and initiate some opportunities for people to be employed in that industry in order to give western Canadians a break so that they can really make and fulfil commitments with regard to foreign grain sales?