

The Budget—Mr. Dantzer

makes this a necessity but it will be interesting to see how that is worked out.

There is more talk of greater disclosure for pensioners and more representation on pension boards. All of these are very good concepts.

However, as is usual with the Government, it does not fully implement its programs. It brings in these programs gradually and does not expect them to be fully implemented until 1987. There is no need for that delay. Those concepts are well established and understood. Certainly I would like to see them come in more quickly.

I see that my time is getting short. I would merely conclude by saying that I believe, as I said at the beginning of my remarks, that I was discouraged by the Budget and I believe the people of Canada are discouraged.

This is 1984, the year George Orwell predicted a catastrophe. I would like to remind this House that for the first time in our history we are spending over \$100 billion this year; at least, we will be when the Estimates are in. That is \$100 billion worth of spending as though we are a bunch of mad, drunken sailors. Government borrowing this year will be \$29.2 billion. The total personal savings of Canadians is only \$32 billion, which means that the Government will have to demand from Canadians \$92 billion. Where is the money that will provide the investment, the engine, to carry this country on to economic activity and success? It surely cannot be from personal savings because the Government will have to take all of that to service its debt and to cover its overspending of past years.

● (1115)

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, any country where governments, including provincial and municipal governments, take \$10,306 in taxes from an income of \$22,000 is a country that is really in deep trouble. The people of Canada are very, very discouraged with this Government, and this Budget does not do a thing to relieve them of that discouragement.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, it is seldom that we have an opportunity during the Budget debate to get information from the Government on pensions. As the Hon. Member for Okanagan North (Mr. Dantzer) has done a great deal of study on this subject, I would like to put a question to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order, please. I think it is clearly understood that questions and comments should be on the speech of the Hon. Member who has just concluded his remarks. I think there is a manner in which the Hon. Member can work his question into that context.

Mr. McKinnon: That is precisely what I was doing, with respect, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member was speaking about pensions. Has the Hon. Member been able to determine whether these reforms would permit the continuation of benefits on remarriage? I notice that in the Budget Speech the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) said, under the heading of "Improving Pensions for Canadians", that "these benefits will

not end if an individual remarries". But he was speaking of the things he hoped to get into private pension plans. Later on in his speech, under the same heading concerning the Canada Pension Plan, he spoke of the continuation of survivor benefits on remarriage.

Has the Hon. Member been able to find out what the Government intends to do about the existing pensions, such as the civil service and armed forces pensions? Will that be coming about in 1987 or when the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) gives her long-awaited speech under the Canada Pension Plan heading?

Mr. Dantzer: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the Government's Budget proposes to deal first with those things under its legislative jurisdiction, the Pension Benefits Standards Act. The Government also proposes to talk to the provinces on the Canada Pension Plan to bring in some of the reforms as proposed under the Canada Pension Benefits Standards Act. So far I have not been able to ascertain whether that will apply to civil service pensions, to the military or to the RCMP. I would be very shocked, as I am sure everybody will be on this side of the House, if when the Government brings in that proposed legislation the Government does not also include those particular Bills which cover the civil service, policemen and members of the armed forces. I see the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. Erola) nodding her head as if she is saying yes. I hope that is correct. If it is not, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, we might have some delay on this side of the House.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, the Hon. Member for Okanagan North (Mr. Dantzer). It concerns one of the more serious problems in Canada regarding pensions. It has to do with delays in processing veterans' pensions.

● (1120)

Recently in Ontario a veteran obtained 5,000 names on a petition to be presented to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Campbell) complaining about pension delays. Would the Hon. Member support a Bill to limit the time that the Pension Commission and the Department can take to process the pensions of veterans? I have suggested before that a maximum period of six months should be allowed in which to deal with the three stages. If the Department cannot process a veteran's pension within six months, he should automatically obtain the pension he requested. Has the Hon. Member studied that proposal or given any thought to it?

Mr. Dantzer: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say that the terms of reference of the task force on pensions did not cover that particular aspect. However, my desk, as well as the Hon. Member's desk, is full of examples of veterans dying before their assessment has been made. The number of veterans is decreasing every year. Obviously the Department is well staffed. One one seems to understand why there is such difficulty in assessing what should be fairly clear according to the norms laid down in terms of whether people are entitled to