

S.O. 43

their budget to accommodate this increase will lose their homes. Since Canadians are being faced with massive payment increases over which they have no control, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis):

That the National Housing Act be amended to include a provision for a mortgage insurance fund which would protect home owners against the uncertainties of major increases in their mortgage payments when their mortgages come up for renewal.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Paproski: Cosgrove said no.

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● (1415)

FINANCE

TAXATION OF NORTHERN BENEFIT ALLOWANCES—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and public importance. The November, 1982, termination of the moratorium on taxation of northern benefit allowances is a recipe for short-term industrial chaos in Canada's mining industry and for the long-term demise of family and community life for workers in many northern resource centres.

In spite of serious warnings by both mine labour and management about the inadequacy of a one-year transition period to deal with two or three-year agreements and adjustment to an as yet undefined regime of general northern assistance, the consistent and continuing refusal of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) to meet with Steelworker Union officials on this subject is both incomprehensible and irresponsible. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy):

That this House demand that the Minister of Finance stop hiding and immediately agree to meet with United Steelworker representatives on this issue in response to their urgent requests of several months' standing.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

PENSIONS

EFFECT OF BUDGET ON PENSIONERS' INCOME

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Consumers' Association of Canada has called the Liberal budget "outrageously unfair" to senior citizens, and the association's pension consultant, Thomas Delaney, has estimated that between 200,000 and 400,000 senior citizens will be hurt by the budget.

The minister has earned the trust of many senior citizens. Is she planning to betray their trust by allowing pensioners' income to be reduced? Specifically, has she also asked the Minister of Finance to reinstate the \$1,000 pension deduction for pensioners contributing to an RRSP?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that in several articles—she mentioned only one—published recently in the English Canadian press, in which the impression was given that Canadian pensioners would be adversely affected by the budget, one or two examples were given of pensioners with very high incomes who, though they were over sixty-five, were still working and receiving a salary or some kind of income, and who also were still contributing to a registered retirement savings plan. Obviously, they happen to be in the upper socioeconomic levels of our society, and their earnings are much higher this year, they will have to pay more taxes just like any other Canadian. There is nothing unfair about this at all. I can assure the House that all Canadian pensioners are benefiting from the MacEachen budget, because of the high rate of indexation being applied to all pensions.

[English]

CALCULATION OF TAXABLE INCOME

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who has told the House in her answer, as I understand it, that the income of pensioners will not be reduced under the budget. I would therefore ask her why John Arthur, the president of the Canadian Pensions Conference, said that her own officials say that the proposal to tax health care benefits would disqualify many pensioners from receiving supplementary pensions such as the guaranteed income supplement. The minister's own officials are telling people in the pension field that pensions will be reduced. Is it true that the minister is refusing to take health care benefits into the calculation of taxable income in defiance of the budget of the Minister of Finance?