

## NORTHERN AFFAIRS

## MEASURES TO ASSIST NORTHERN RESIDENTS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to propose a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. In view of today's announcement that the consumer price index for November has taken yet another leap upwards, bringing the annual inflation rate to over 11 per cent, and in view of the fact that this continuing erosion of consumer spending power is particularly serious for Canadians on fixed incomes and those living in the northern parts of the provinces and territories where living costs are already disproportionately high, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Cariboo-Chilcotin (Mr. Greenaway):

That the government be required to introduce immediately a budget supplement containing measures designed to cushion the crushing burden inflicted on the northern poor, as a result of the interest rate and energy policies of this government and its weak-kneed backbench supporters.

**Madam Speaker:** For presentation, this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

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## SOCIAL SECURITY

## ASSISTANCE TO WIDOWS AND ELDERLY—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity under the provisions of Standing Order 43. Whereas many widows and single women over the age of 50 and under the age of 65 are living well below the poverty line, some existing on dry bread and watery soup and some of whom are the widows of veterans who left parts of their bodies on the battlefields fighting against totalitarianism—and if the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) wants proof, I will be glad to take him to homes where this is a reality—therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Simcoe South (Mr. Stewart):

That the Government of Canada stop wasting money on billboards and trips for the Prime Minister around the world, and use this money to give these genuine Canadians a decent standard of living worthy of our country, for which the husbands of the war widows gave their lives.

**Madam Speaker:** For presentation, this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

## Oral Questions

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## FINANCE

## ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME CANADIANS TO MEET INCREASED COSTS

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** As Madam Speaker knows, I have served notice of intention to seek an emergency debate later this day on the cruel impact this government's economic policies are having upon the lives of ordinary Canadians.

I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. The minister will know that the treasurer of Ontario has suggested that some of this government's increased energy revenues should be applied next winter to a temporary national subsidy of \$75 to \$100 to help low-income Canadians pay their rising home heating costs. The minister will also know that we have had cost of living figures published today which show that fuel oil costs are up 26.9 per cent from a year ago and the cost of gas is up 20.7 per cent from a year ago.

• (1415)

In light of these facts, will the Minister of Finance give an undertaking to the House of Commons now that he will co-operate with provincial governments to help low-income Canadians pay their heating bills this winter, if possible?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, as the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has indicated, the provincial treasurer of the province of Ontario did circulate yesterday a technical working paper on the subject of home heating costs and the steps that might be taken by governments to deal with this problem. The provincial treasurer also asked that his proposal be studied and that when that study is completed I get back to him and give him my response. I replied positively to that request and at the present time I have requested my officials to examine the proposal itself and the impact of the proposal, and then we will decide what our position is, which I will convey, as I have indicated, to the treasurer of the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Clark:** Madam Speaker, we have a situation where, with fuel costs rocketing upwards this year, the response of the Minister of Finance of Canada is that he is going to study a technical working paper which would take effect next year. What we want to know is whether the minister and the Government of Canada are prepared to accept their responsibility, put studies aside, and do something to help ordinary Canadians who are facing expensive heating cost rises this winter.

Let me indicate to the minister that the government of Ontario, as he knows, has indicated that if Ottawa refuses to help the citizens of Ontario, Ontario will act alone. But that will not help low-income Canadians in Atlantic Canada or in Quebec. I ask the minister if he offers any hope at all to those low-income Canadians anywhere in Canada who are facing rising heating oil and fuel costs this year. Are they simply to