

Government Orders

meagre \$100 or \$200 extra a month in pension benefits as a result of the Older Worker Adjustment Income Plan is taxed on the basis of 100 per cent of those earnings? There does not seem to be much equity there.

There are two ways we can look at the matter of taxation. One is the tax system and tax changes themselves, and the other is some of the things that the government spends its money on. I found it rather interesting, at a time when the government and the finance minister are talking about the need for restraint and additional tax measures in order to pay for the operations of government, that we have some of the kind of spending going on that still continues.

I refer now to an item that was in today's *Quorum* from *The Montreal Gazette* of October 8. The headline is:

Taxing Subject Matter

In time of government restraint, how much do we need to know about eunuchs in imperial China?

It is datelined Ottawa. It reads:

At a time when the government is paring services, it is spending \$15,435 to finance a study on eunuchs in imperial China, with special focus on the 10th to 14th centuries.

That makes it even more vitally important if you look at the timeframe.

It says:

As it is freezing public service salaries, the government is spending \$305,070 toward its continuing financial backing of a private project to assemble a dictionary of old English, or rather, auld English.

Among other projects Canadians are helping finance through taxes like the GST are a study of the modern American diet (\$27,700), an analysis of criminality and religious charity in 16th century Bologna--

That is really vital to the welfare of the Canadian taxpayers.

--and a look at the late prehistoric archaeology of the Ha'apai Islands in the Kingdom of Tonga (\$80,318).

These are just a few of 680 scholarly projects supported in the fiscal year 1990-91 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded by this government. That agency, created under the Secretary of State Department in 1977, handed out some \$82

million in 1990-91 which is up from \$75 million the year before.

The president of the agency says:

--the federal spending squeeze meant 473 projects worthy of support had to be turned down.

That is really a shame. I wonder about those kinds of projects. At this time of fiscal restraint and when the government is imposing new taxes on Canadians, what are the gems that we missed out on in the last little while?

These are some of the spending priorities that this government obviously has and at the same time it is making some other tax changes.

I want to refer back to one that makes these other ones seem rather minuscule because this one has to do with forgiving perhaps billions of dollars of revenue from some of the richest families in Canada.

The finance minister would have us believe that he scrounged around to find every possible source of funds that could possibly be put toward deficit reduction. I am quoting at some length here from an article in *The Globe and Mail* from last March 13:

But few Canadians are aware that just before his deficit-slashing budget last month, Mr. Wilson's own department quietly gave up a source of potentially billions of dollars that were scheduled to come into the national treasury beginning in the next 21 months.

• (1620)

This change does not appear in the bill currently before us, but we are expecting it momentarily. The government has suggested that it is coming. In many ways this is a major measure of tax forgiveness to the wealthiest families in Canada, which it has been attempting to sneak through over the Canadian people at the same time that we have a cap on social spending arrangements with the provinces and people on welfare and social assistance and small children are not getting enough to eat. This assistance which cities across Canada are dependent upon and many other vital programs all members have agreed are vitally necessary for the welfare of the people of Canada but are being cut back and slashed.

The Public Service on which we depend for the delivery of many of our programs is being told that it will get zero and zero, unless its members are willing to give up either their jobs or the jobs of their fellow employees.