

Alleged Non-Institution of Just Society

Our old age security pensioners are not the only ones who are in difficulties. Veterans are also in difficulties. I expect that all hon. members have received letters from veterans who are in trouble. I recently received two letters from a very good friend of mine. He is a war veteran who lives in Castlegar, and he pointed out some of the troubles veterans are encountering.

• (5:50 p.m.)

We increase allowances to different classes of pensioners but we do not amend the regulations. As a result, they may receive a small increase in one area and a little later on the authorities may find that they have been overpaid. They are then asked to repay the government. If we are to give our veterans and other Canadians an increase, we should tell them that we will raise the exemptions at the same time, so they will receive some benefit from the increase. That is what we are trying to bring about. Instead, we frequently find that pensioners are brought into a new tax bracket and all kinds of complications arise. I contend this is because we have not amended other pieces of legislation.

I shall comment on only one other matter. It is in connection with the 11 per cent tax on building materials. It should be removed. We have been talking about building houses for Canadians. Removal of the 11 per cent tax would give a tremendous impetus to the building trades. The provincial tax should also be removed. This would be an excellent measure for the government to include in the budget which will be brought down later this week. I commend this step to all hon. members.

I would like to say much more but I shall leave a few moments for another speaker to put forward his views on this motion.

Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank hon. members opposite for today's debate which is the closing episode in a long series of supply day debates on matters pertaining to the Canadian economy. I understand that the notice filed for tomorrow will not directly relate the final supply day debate to the Department of Finance and matters of an economic nature. For that I must confess I am grateful.

Throughout last winter and this spring I had the pleasure of listening very carefully to suggestions made by hon. members opposite on matters of economic concern. I assure them that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) and the government have taken into account the many suggestions that have come from all sides of the House. We have taken into account those suggestions that have been responsible; that have recognized the realities of Canada, the fact that governments must raise money as well as spend it, the federal nature of our country, the fact that the ability of the federal government to control and manage the economy in Canada is not unrestricted and that provincial governments have great areas in which they are sovereign and the fact that Canada is part of an international community and that decisions

[Mr. Harding.]

made in Canada must be made within the framework of the realities of the economy of the world in which we live.

In speaking a few moments ago the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Gray) indicated the problems that spokesmen for the government are facing in dealing with this motion which refers to items of direct application to the Income Tax Act. We are less than 72 hours from the time the Minister of Finance will be presenting his budget. Budget secrecy is constraining upon us at this time; we simply cannot respond as we would like. However, I am sure the nation and hon. members opposite will appreciate that the answers to many of the questions asked today and earlier will be forthcoming when the budget is brought down. At that time spokesmen for the government will be in a position to discuss the various issues that have been raised without the constraint of budget secrecy.

In closing I wish to extend my thanks and the thanks of the government to members on all sides of the House for the contributions they have made during what I regard to have been a most interesting series of economic debates this past winter and spring.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Six o'clock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are hon. members agreed that the Chair shall call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being six o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to special order made Wednesday, June 2, 1971, and Standing Order 58. (11) the proceedings on the motion have expired.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

POST OFFICE ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING STAMP AGENTS' COMMISSION, LETTER MAIL PREPARATION ARRANGEMENTS, EXTRAORDINARY SERVICES, MEMBERS' MAIL, ETC.

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-240, amending the Post Office Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. It is suggested that motions Nos. 1 and 2 be considered and