

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the suggestion made by the Leader of the New Democratic Party is not only naive, it is reckless. The motion that somehow the Government could arbitrarily dictate an interest rate level in this country, and that this would lead to growth and prosperity, while the United States has interest rates significantly higher than in Canada, is a notion which is pure imagination—

Mr. Broadbent: And one you believed a week ago.

Mr. Lalonde: It is fairyland. The Hon. Member knows very well that if we had, in Canada, interest rates at 9 per cent, and they were at 11 per cent in the United States, even Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party would be the first ones to ship their money to the United States. He knows that.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL REVENUE

REPORTING OF PERSONAL INCOME

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, at the request of the Minister of National Revenue, I shall put my question to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance is aware, as are so many other Members of this House, that a number of people who receive gratuities as part of their income and declare that income do not receive commensurate benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Especially considering the fact that the Government of Quebec has now passed Bill 43 which will oblige all employees receiving gratuities to declare such income, can the Minister of Finance give the House the assurance that unemployment insurance benefits will be commensurate to declared income for all Canadians and especially for Quebecers as a result of Bill 43?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to discuss this matter not long ago with the Quebec Minister of Finance. The Hon. Member is also aware that Quebec has a new Minister of Revenue who is looking into the matter at this time. He has read the press reports just as I have. It seems that the Bill introduced by the Government of Quebec is now being revised, so I am going to wait and see how the situation develops. I am following developments very closely, and as soon as we are able to reach a decision, I shall let the Hon. Member know.

TAXATION OF TIPS CALCULATED AS INCOME

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister. Since the Government of Quebec stated before the association of restaurant owners, restaurant employees and hotel workers that it would drop consideration of incomes for 1983 and previous years, could the Minister inform the House, considering the fact that these

workers have no fringe benefits for this income, whether the Government is prepared to act in the same spirit as the Government of Quebec in dealing with workers who earn tips?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous reply, the matter does not seem to have gelled quite yet at the National Assembly and within the Quebec Government, I am first going to see exactly what transpires from current negotiations, and we shall then be able to review the situation in the light of whatever definitive decision Quebec will make.

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

DELAY IN PROCESSING INCAPACITY ALLOWANCE APPLICATIONS

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. The Minister will know that he has a very serious problem in his Department. Veterans who are applying for exceptional incapacity allowance are having to wait an unreasonable length of time for the process to be completed. One example is Mr. Alan Bell of Toronto who had to fight for seven years before he received his allowance. An 84-year-old veteran in Vancouver, Mr. Fred Carter, applied three years ago, and still no decision has been reached. Mr. Carter has a heart problem, arthritis, and a bad hip. What is the Minister going to do to correct this ridiculous situation?

Hon. W. Bennett Campbell (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raised those two particular cases before the Standing Committee just this week. I did indicate to the Hon. Member, in response to his criticism of the processing time, that we were working diligently to reduce that processing time. As Hon. Members know, I am not at liberty to discuss individual cases on the floor of the House. However, I did indicate to the Hon. Member that I would undertake to look into those two particular cases and report back to him.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER RESIGN

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Mr. Speaker, we have been listening to that stock answer for years. Obviously the Minister cannot find a solution to the problem. He has been responsible for that portfolio for the last three years. Will he resign, and let someone else take over who can find a solution to this ridiculous situation?

Hon. W. Bennett Campbell (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has been trotting out the same type of statistics for the last three years. I have indicated to him on numerous occasions that not only has the issue of the backlog been addressed, but the processing time on average has been reduced from some 334 days two years ago to less