

Oral Questions

I have in mind a case in 1976 when I was informed that an honour would be awarded to a very distinguished Canadian, the Right Hon. Mr. Diefenbaker. I had no power to recommend it. Indeed, I am sure that Mr. Diefenbaker himself had not recommended it when he was Prime Minister. Therefore, there are many precedents for such an award. I think the constitutional position would be that the award is made by the Queen of Canada and, therefore, she is not a foreign power awarding an award to a Canadian.

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INCOME TAX**METHOD OF PAYMENT APPLICABLE TO SENIOR CITIZENS**

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Taxpayers are required to make periodic payments of income tax during the year. I quote from a letter to me from the Minister of National Revenue dated November 15, 1982:

If tax is not deducted at the source from at least three-quarters of an individual's income, as in the case of self-employed and many retired persons, that person is required to pay his or her estimated tax payable for the year by equal quarterly instalments.

I ask the Minister if he will consider removing this regulation from senior citizens and other retired citizens now barely subsisting on pensions.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, if, as the Hon. Member is saying, these senior citizens are barely subsisting, they will not be paying tax under our present very generous regime in terms of income tax for senior citizens, but I will look into the specific case given by the Hon. Member. I will give it a careful examination and I will consult with the Minister of National Revenue on the subject he has raised.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION**CONSIDERATION OF SATURDAY WICKET CLOSURES**

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation. In his absence, I will direct it to his Parliamentary Secretary who, I am sure, is aware of the situation. I have been informed that numerous postal districts in Ontario are holding or have held meetings to consider Saturday wicket closures in Post Offices. I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary could tell us if the Minister is aware of these closures being considered, if he was consulted, and does he support this reduction in service.

Mr. David Berger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister may I say I believe the Minister is aware of the

closure of postal stations. I believe it was done in order to reduce costs and to improve efficiency. I believe that the Minister is also considering various representations that have been made on this subject.

REQUEST FOR REFERRAL TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, I might remind the Parliamentary Secretary we are concerned with the Saturday closure of wickets in Post Offices. I am sure the Parliamentary Secretary is aware of the reliance placed on these Saturday wickets by rural people. They come in on Saturdays to pick up their registered mail and parcels. In this time of economic hardship there are people who work in other communities and only have the opportunity to pick up their parcels and so on, on Saturdays. They do their postal work on Saturdays. The Crown Corporation was not set up to give less service at a higher rate of cost. Will the Parliamentary Secretary assure the House he will press the Minister that, before this reduction in service takes place, or any other reduction in service that Canada Post is considering, it will be referred to a special committee of the House?

Mr. David Berger (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, we have to make a distinction between rural delivery on Saturday as opposed to the question the Hon. Member seems to be raising, which is picking up mail at the wickets. I will take notice of the Hon. Member's representations. I am sure the Minister will be prepared to discuss any problems that have occurred through this effort in trying to improve the efficiency of the Post Office and to reduce costs.

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THE ECONOMY**DECLINE IN PRODUCTIVITY**

Hon. George Hees (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. I would like to welcome him back and tell him that I missed my sparring partner during the last week.

As Canada's adverse balance of trade in fully manufactured products, which are the ones that produce the jobs, increased from \$4.9 billion in 1972 to over \$21 billion last year and during that same ten years Canada's productivity fell steadily until today it is by far the lowest of the 16 OECD countries, will the Prime Minister outline to the House what new initiatives he and his Government intend to introduce to correct this very serious situation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member has asked this question in exactly the same form so many times that I think he should continue his shadow boxing and not worry about his sparring partner.