

are about two million senior citizens. What did the budget have for these two million Canadians? Sixty per cent of these people will derive no benefit at all from the budget because they are receiving the guaranteed income supplement. For those whose incomes prevent them from getting additional assistance because of private pension schemes, there is a benefit. For this I am personally pleased, because now they will be tax exempt up to \$1,000 a year on income from private pensions. But, I repeat, the majority will get no benefits whatever, not even an increase in the basic OAS.

It is also worthy to note, Mr. Speaker, though tragic, that there is nothing in this budget to assist the native peoples of Canada. Once again they have been totally ignored. Some time ago I asked the Minister of Finance if he would grant a tax concession to retired Indian teachers who had taught in Indian schools on reserves all their lives. When they were working they did not have to pay income tax because of the Indian Act. Now that they have retired they find they have to pay income tax on their superannuation, yet the source of income is the same—the federal government. In view of the fact that both their salary and superannuation are considerably lower than those who teach or have taught off reserves, I asked the Minister of Finance if he would eliminate this tax on superannuation. He passed my representation on to the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Basford) whose executive assistant sloughed it off with departmental jargon showing lack of both sense and compassion. I intend to pursue this issue further.

Mr. Speaker, my time is running out, if it has not already, but 20 minutes is not enough time to attack a phony, misleading budget. In conclusion, I have searched in vain for the answer to the question, what has this budget done for the average Canadian? Is there anything in it of substance to effectively cure the monster which is gobbling up everyone's savings, driving up the cost of living and provoking conflict between unions and management? No doubt those who do not have will be the payers for those who do. As I have pointed out, the only persons who got a break on November 18 are the wealthy, and the corporations; and by no stretch of the imagination can anyone say that prior to the budget they were the most vulnerable members of our society. This budget is so out of tune with the economic realities of today that I predict we will see another budget within six months. But I am not holding my breath; we will probably just get another replay.

[Translation]

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, I am especially glad to take part in the debate on the budget.

We have two opportunities each year to express our personal opinions on subjects which are important to us. Today, I would like to tell you about my opinions and make a few remarks on a very current subject and certainly one of the foremost problems of our time—that world poverty and particularly starvation.

Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to tell the House about the social economic problems of the area and the constituency which I am privileged to represent. However, during the debates on bills to be brought forward during this Parliament, I will have other opportunities to talk

The Budget—Mr. I. Pelletier

about this and to describe the economic situation in my constituency where economic readjustment remains slow.

The subject about which I shall talk today is much more general and much more far reaching, but it still concerns the people of my area. It is the problem of poverty and hunger in general.

The measures announced by the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) in his budget speech are extremely important for the Canadian economy and we shall have other opportunities to discuss them. However, Mr. Speaker, I was extremely glad to note the remarks of the Minister of Finance when he said, and I quote:

Our countries, including Canada, must review their foreign aid programs in the light of . . .

—the present situation.

Canada must, at the minimum, help these people meet the most urgent and basic need of their people—food.

The minister also stated: We also intend to expand all our contributions to developing countries capable of increasing their own food production.

These are moral commitments. We intend to fulfill them.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege and the honour to be a member of the Canadian delegation to the world food conference held in Rome from November 3 to 17 and I thought it might be interesting to tell my colleagues in this House about some of the comments that were made recently at the conference and generally outline the international food situation as described at the conference as well as the Canadian position assumed at Rome and the possibility of substantially increasing our aid to developing countries.

For a dozen years certain international agencies, especially the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, have been warning the world about the possibility of a food shortage and giving ways and means to avoid the crisis now confronting us on a world scale. What has brought us to this point? Whatever the reason, said United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim at the beginning of the conference, the crisis is facing us and we therefore must act now.

It is paradoxical, Mr. Speaker, that the present world food shortage, accompanied by malnutrition, which has never been so widespread, should happen at a time when the potential of technological progress is taking on unprecedented proportions.

When the FAO launched an invitation to all the countries of the world for a world food conference, everyone was asked at the start to present concrete provisions and to suggest immediate solutions to the extremely urgent problem of hunger in many areas of the Third World.

In many ways, and especially as to concrete provisions, one could say that the Rome conference was half a success.

On the other hand, the fact of having brought to the attention of the world the main ingredients of this complex problem of hunger and thus revealing the alarming proportions of the situation is sufficient evidence that the Rome conference was a success.

How is it that the food problem, the problem millions of people face to feed themselves, and the malnutrition prob-