

heavy tax upon the poor and upon lower and middle-income Canadians?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has not given the information I asked for. How many months before budget night did his minister stop considering this fiscal instrument? How many months before?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Put it to a committee.

INDEXATION—RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development. It relates to his new responsibilities for social development and, indeed, the well-being of all Canadians.

The minister might want to explain to the House, particularly in light of the comments of the Prime Minister, how deindexing of income tax deductions will assist his responsibilities with respect to low and moderate-income people in this country.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, I do not have anything to add to what the Prime Minister said.

An hon. Member: I bet you don't.

Mr. Chrétien: The Minister of Finance is studying all aspects of fiscal policies before preparing a budget. We will know when he has a budget. At that time, with whatever moves he makes, I am sure it will be a good Liberal budget.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: Madam Speaker, my concern is with respect to the responsibilities of the minister. He is not responsible for the budget. In fact, it seems to me that his responsibility ought to deal with those persons who will be adversely affected by deindexing.

I should like to ask the minister whether he or anyone in his government has already made representations to the Minister of Finance with respect to how the measure to de-index will affect single parents on mother's allowance and, indeed, assist the Minister of National Health and Welfare to bring senior citizens up to the poverty line, which is her desire?

● (1425)

Mr. Chrétien: Madam Speaker, this House has already voted an increase of \$35 to the benefit of people who are retired and on fixed incomes. We have acted to show our consideration for citizens of Canada in that way. When there is a real budget, I am sure it will be much more acceptable to Canadians than the budget presented last December.

Oral Questions

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SPEAKER OF AUSTRALIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS

Madam Speaker: I should like to draw to the attention of the House the presence in our gallery of Sir Billy Snedden, the Speaker of the House of Commons of Australia.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NORTHERN PIPELINES

FINANCIAL GUARANTEES FOR ALASKA HIGHWAY NATURAL GAS PIPELINE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Yesterday, in the House, the minister told us the government had obtained assurances that some \$500 million would be spent on the northern pipeline project. I should like to ask whether the minister will confirm today that, far from being the financial guarantees which are required by an act of this Parliament, this sum merely constitutes some 2 per cent of the \$22 billion required for the whole project, and thus does not meet those guarantee requirements at all.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I certainly never stated that this constituted the full guarantee to which the hon. member was referring. I can understand his referring to the \$500 million as a picayune amount.

Mr. Broadbent: I did not.

Mr. Lalonde: It is still a large amount committed to this very important project by private sponsors—\$500 million. It is clear, when the hon. member refers to the full financial commitment by all the private sponsors as not being provided by this particular undertaking, that it is an undertaking, as I indicated yesterday in my answer. If my hon. friend refers to *Hansard*, he will see it clearly directed toward engineering and design, and it is not representative of the full cost of completion of the line. Some people have estimated the total cost as being as high as \$20 billion.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, that is precisely the point; it is only 2 per cent of the amount which would be required by the act passed by this Parliament. As the minister knows, the cabinet has before it a proposal which, if anything, is more serious in its implications than the paltry, in a comparative sense, sum amounting to 2 per cent being put up as a guarantee for this pipeline, and that is the submission made by the National Energy Board that the act of Parliament be changed.

I would like to ask the minister whether he will assure the House that the proposal made by the National Energy Board, that the financial guarantee requirements to the people of Canada be taken out of the act, will be categorically rejected