

Supply—Finance

sympathetic to their cause by trying to enlist a broad base of support for the objectives they have chosen, I can only say that the members of the organization are being ill served by the executive they have chosen.

I am confident that the minister will pay heed to the existing need. I know he has his difficulties in working out and presenting a budget. He has great fiscal responsibilities in times like these. I know that the adjustment of pensions for retired civil servants is long overdue.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Will the hon. member permit a question. In the reference he made to the federal superannuates national association, was he referring to the organization on a national basis or the activities of the association in his own constituency? If I may say so, I ask that question because nothing like that has happened in my part of the country, so far as this association is concerned.

Mr. Francis: Mr. Chairman, I communicated with the national president of the association subsequent to the election and brought this matter to his attention. I have had no communication from him saying that he regarded what happened merely as a local action. He did not dissociate himself from it and I can only conclude therefore that what happened came about as a result of the policy of the national association.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) told us for the thousandth, if not the millionth time, how important it is to increase the pension of retired civil servants, and we agree with him.

However, they are not the only ones who need a higher income which would enable them to meet their obligations more easily. I understand that the Department of Finance is studying the situation of the retired civil servants, but I feel that it should also study that of the Canadian people as a whole.

Unemployed Canadians, for instance, who get only unemployment insurance benefits, are in a much worse situation than the retired civil servants, and yet nothing much is done for them. The people who live on welfare are in the same situation, and there are many of them. Therefore, the formula advocated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and others who hold the same views will not solve the problem.

[*Mr. Francis.*]

A while ago, I saw the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) walking behind the curtains, his hands in his pockets. I would rather see him there, his hands in his pockets, than outside the house his hands in the pockets of the Canadian citizens.

Mr. Chairman, on February 25, 1967, in a speech to the University College Alumnae Association of University College of Toronto, the former minister of finance (Mr. Sharp) said:

—the second point I should like to mention in passing. I think that we can now anticipate the beginning of an international redistribution of wealth—

It was the predecessor of the present Minister of Finance who spoke like that.

—an international redistribution of wealth—

We talk about international redistribution of wealth. We do not even manage the redistribution of our national wealth among the Canadian people and we already think of an international redistribution. We are close to talking about interplanetary redistribution. Some fine day, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance will no doubt be on his way to the moon to find outlets for our Canadian wealth. I continue my quotation:

—and the kind of equalization formulas which we apply to the provinces in our country could very well be applied in the long run on a more total scale.

What is more important still, disposing very high income, the peoples of the wealthy countries will more readily accept to redistributing their wealth to help others.

It would be true if we had very high income but it has been proved that such is the case for less than 10 per cent of our population, which means that nearly 90 per cent of the Canadian people have inadequate income in spite of the high national production in Canada.

The former minister of finance also told us that within the next few years—if one can forecast 33 years ahead of time, as the present Minister of Finance said recently international redistribution would be a necessity.

Again—I quote the words of the former minister of finance:

What is more important still, disposing of very high income—

But let us, first of all, get this very high income that we cannot now achieve. Under the present system, we take away from the “haves” to give to the “have nots” thus impoverishing just about everyone. If we take