

*Oral Questions***PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS**

FEDERAL EXAMINATION OF PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Madam Speaker, my question was for the Secretary of State but in his absence I will direct it to the Minister of Justice who, last week in an answer to a question by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, said:

—the Secretary of State has already granted funds to at least one group in British Columbia to consider the implications of the legislation and to engage in public education with respect to it.

In view of the routine nature of that answer, as though that practice is routine, is it the policy of the Government to examine provincial policies to see which ones the Government disagrees with, and then fund organizations in each of the Provinces if it disagrees with the aims of particular legislation? I would like to ask the Minister what are the criteria that the Government uses to make those judgments.

● (1510)

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend may also have a question to address to my colleague, the Secretary of State. However, let me remind him that one of the reasons that we were looking at the legislation in British Columbia is that we were asked to do so by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, who raised the question in the House last week.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan: Obviously there are occasions when the federal Government does have to look to provincial legislation. However, in this case, to the best of my knowledge the grant which has been made by the Secretary of State is a perfectly proper one for normal purposes.

Mr. Friesen: It is apparent, then, Madam Speaker, that the Minister of Justice takes his marching orders from the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

GRANT TO BRITISH COLUMBIA ORGANIZATION

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): My supplementary question is directed to the Secretary of State. In view of the statement made by the Minister of Justice with respect to the grant made to a British Columbia organization, would the Minister confirm that, first of all? Second, to what organization was the grant made, and how much of it was made to the organization? In view of the statement made by the Minister of Justice that it involves at least one organization, is the Secretary of State intending to make further grants to other organizations and, if so, which ones?

Hon. Serge Joyal (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that since 1970 we have had a program to support human rights groups all over Canada, not only in British Columbia but in all the ten Provinces. Any groups that want to apply to the program are

free to do so, and the conditions and criteria are well known. We do study each request individually. If the request meets the objectives of the program, we do grant the money as appropriated by Parliament.

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INCOME TAX

REQUIREMENT THAT SENIOR CITIZENS MAKE QUARTERLY PAYMENTS

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Could he explain to the Canadian people, especially the senior citizens of this country, why they must pay income tax quarterly to the Government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I would like to refer the Hon. Member to the provisions of the Income Tax Act, which state that when part of your income is not subject to deductions at the source, taxes due on this income must be paid quarterly. Naturally, this situation can cause problems to certain groups, such as senior citizens, which the Hon. Member mentioned. However, I cannot preclude one group from meeting the requirements contained in the Income Tax Act without parliamentary approval. The Act would therefore have to be amended accordingly to meet the wishes expressed by the Hon. Member. This requirement of the Act as it relates to senior citizens concerns me as well as other Members on both sides of the House. We are looking at solutions to correct the situation. I have already discussed this with the Minister of Finance. I will have other opportunities to discuss the matter with him and if it is possible to implement special provisions for a particular group of taxpayers, we shall see what can be done.

[*English*]

REQUEST THAT EXCEPTION BE MADE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Will the Minister make a firm commitment today to request the Minister of Finance, in his next budget, to make that allowance? The Government makes exceptions for all kinds of people. Surely it can make an exception, in this instance, for senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, whatever the sympathy we may feel for a particular group of taxpayers, I think that it would be irresponsible to change the provisions of the act without having first examined the consequences of such action. I can assure the Hon. Member that we are looking at the various groups and at the consequences of a possible change. If with such a