

Mr. Simmons: I shall do that, and I shall do it on my schedule, not that of the hon. member opposite.

Mr. Gamble: We can't wait all day.

Mr. Simmons: One would not know there is any good news by listening to the speakers opposite tonight. What is it about hon. members opposite? Are they masochists by nature? What is it about them which constrains them to talk about gloom and doom and about Armageddon every time they open their mouths?

● (0140)

Why is it that tonight they have been so dishonestly selective in citing facts to make their case of gloom and doom? It is not all bad news. Here is some good news. First, during the third quarter of 1980, after declines in the two previous quarters, the good news is that the real gross national expenditures grew about one-half of 1 per cent.

An hon. Member: You are a lunatic.

Mr. Simmons: They do not say that. I cite a fact which is clearly on the public record. That is just number one. As soon as they hear good news, as soon as they see you are going to make a point, they become really exercised because you are about to destroy their doom and gloom scenario. There are problems, and the first point I make is that the gross national expenditures are up in the third quarter. They do not want to admit that kind of thing, nor do they want to admit that the merchandise trade balance has posted \$658 million in October.

Mr. Kilgour: Tell us anything that is good.

Mr. Simmons: If the gentleman would listen, I would tell him a number of things. And if he would listen, I would not even have to yell out what I am telling him.

An hon. Member: Give us some real good news.

Mr. Simmons: Now, Mr. Speaker, I cannot wait until *The Vancouver Sun* prints this one. The hon. member is not out pushing his "householders" tonight, with the hate mail I told him about earlier. He is back tonight, that is good news. Opposition members do not bother to mention the couple of facts which I put on record. I invite gentlemen opposite first to get *Hansard* where they will see clearly what I said. If the hon. member does not understand what I said, I am sure my good friend sitting in front of him, the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling), will explain the whole thing to him. They do not bother to tell those things to the public, nor do they bother to mention a number of government programs put in place by this and past Liberal administrations which address the very issue about which they and we are concerned. The government already has in place a number of programs which add a fair deal of protection to those who are most in need. For example, the old age security, the guaranteed income supplement and the spouse's allowance, all of which are indexed to the cost of living; as the cost of living goes up these payments go up. Such is the case with family allowance.

Economic Conditions

Members opposite know this but they did not bother to mention it. They keep asking what is being done for people on low income and on fixed income. I suppose there is no one in this House who would assert for a second that enough is being done. In those circumstances enough can never be done. But the record should show that some things are being done to help people who are wrestling with the ever-increasing cost of living.

I mentioned the old age security, the guaranteed income supplement, the spouse's allowance and the family incomes which are tied to the cost of living, the child tax credit which is tied to the cost of living, unemployment insurance benefits which are going up in 1981, veterans' allowances which are tied to the cost of living, CPP benefits which are tied to the cost of living. This is just a short list of some of the items. I could mention the income tax system itself which is indexed to the cost of living. When hon. members opposite were rumour-mongering this year, when they were preaching their gloom and doom, using another subtheme but still preaching gloom and doom, they were telling the country how those bad Liberals were going to deindex the income tax. But when we did not do so, was a voice opposite raised in praise because it had not been done? Oh no, they quickly and uncomfortably moved to another subtheme, though the over-all theme was just the same: gloom and doom, gloom and doom. The income tax system is indexed because a past Liberal administration brought in indexing. That indexing is helping people in some measure to cope with the increasing cost of living. Together, those six or seven programs which I have just enumerated are providing about \$3 billion because of indexing-in extra protection from inflation in 1980 alone to recipients of the payments I have just listed. That is something, Mr. Speaker. Even the most unkind analyst of the programs of this government would have to admit that \$3 billion is at least a drop in the bucket. It is certainly something. It is perhaps a small step in the view of people who normally speak for multinationals and who talk in large figures with many zeros and commas. But surely even \$3 billion must have some impact on those people. Surely they must recognize that \$3 billion extra this year in the pockets of recipients of child tax credit, old age security, guaranteed income supplement, Canada Pension Plan benefits, and unemployment insurance, must have some effect on the problem which we are addressing here tonight.

In addition to those programs, let me just mention that there are many other government programs which provide some protection from inflation in a less direct though just as effective way. For example, I am thinking about the Canada assistance plan. Under that plan the government shares with the provincial governments 50 per cent of the cost of certain social services and welfare payments. Therefore, under that program, by the very growth of provincial expenditures, as those expenditures grow, the actual dollar amount which this government puts in as part of those expenditures grows also. So, in an indirect way, programs such as the Canada assistance plan are also indexed to the cost of living.