

*Guaranteed Income*

convince the government of the timeliness of their suggestions, the government nevertheless showed that it did not have the solution. How long will Canadians have to wait, and how long will they have to endure the malaises they now know? We have the responsibility to multiply our representations, our interventions in this House, to ask the government to act in a concrete way.

So favouring one category of people—those at age 60—would also bring about improvements in job opportunities for young people. And I think our social climate would have been corrected and improved.

There is talk about a guaranteed annual income. It is extremely important that each individual have a minimum to live on and even then I would want to make sure when we talk about implementing a guaranteed annual minimum income, for example, that we do not encourage people at the outset to be satisfied with a guaranteed income and reduce their efforts with respect to the work they nevertheless have an obligation to do for their country and fellow citizens. Of course, incentive formulas will have to be introduced to ensure that minimum annual income. There are also incentive programs for jobs and work openings, and it is up to the government in co-operation with organizations I referred to earlier, with businessmen, to create jobs for the young and adults. We have that responsibility. The first responsibility is to try as soon as possible to give a well deserved holiday to a certain category of people, which would indeed make room for younger people. Then we will have done something concrete to meet, I am convinced, the wishes of the people of this country. With regard to the motion under consideration, I am not ashamed to admit that it is with pleasure that I congratulate the Social Credit Party of Canada for having brought in a proposal to enable many hon. members to discuss this question and for reminding the government of its responsibilities. To what extent is the government going to reply positively and quickly to comments made in the House? I do not know. I do hope that it will feel compelled to do so. Once again, I hope that there will be other contributions and that similar motions will be brought in as often as the government will keep on turning a deaf ear to the needs, to the problems facing us every day.

Mr. Speaker, these few comments were made in the hope of bringing Canadians improved conditions and a satisfactory stability, and of receiving an affirmative reply from the government. We hope our interventions will not be forgotten, will not have fallen on deaf ears and that Canadians will be able to benefit from the contributions and the suggestions made. They have been waiting for a long time.

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, when one examines attentively the motion presented by the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte), one realizes from the start that it is a non-confidence motion against the government. One realizes also that this motion blames the government for two separate reasons. First, it blames the government for having taken, according to the Social Credit, no concrete steps to ensure the establishment of a guaranteed minimum income plan, to overcome poverty in Canada. This motion also accuses the government of having done nothing to fight inflation efficiently. It is on

[Mr. La Salle.]

this second point of the motion that I should like to dwell, as my colleague the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik), Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, stated a while ago, in a brilliant way, I think, the reasons why the Canadian government so far did not think it wise to establish a guaranteed minimum income plan.

As for me, I do not agree at all that the government did not do anything to fight inflation efficiently, as it is said in the motion proposed by the hon. member for Champlain, which would have us believe, if we read it attentively, that a guaranteed minimum income could be used to fight inflation. And I do not agree at all on that.

I am not sure at all that a guaranteed income program could be used to fight inflation. On the contrary, I believe that putting more money in circulation and increasing the money supply available to the Canadian people would only increase the demand for products and, should that demand come at a time when there is no mechanism to provide for an equivalent supply, inflation would be still more serious. Making millions of dollars available to the Canadian people through the establishment of a guaranteed minimum income plan could eventually worsen inflation. And it is on that point that I disagree entirely with the hon. member for Champlain, who maintains, according to his motion, that a guaranteed minimum income could fight inflation.

Moreover, I believe it would be a false principle to give money to all Canadians through a guaranteed minimum income, while inflation does not affect everybody. And I should like to insist on that point a few minutes and repeat what was already said in this House, namely that the average Canadian benefits from the simultaneous increase in prices and incomes.

I wish to quote here the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) who, speaking in the House on March 5, said that last year the real per capita personal income of Canadians, which is the income left to each person to spend or save after paying taxes and allowing for the inflation rate, has increased by 6.8 per cent. This means that income has increased more rapidly than the cost of living. This recent rise follows the already exceptional increases of 5.9 per cent and 6.7 per cent recorded in 1971 and 1972 respectively.

The minister went on to say that last year's strong increase in personal income was the result of various factors, notably an unprecedented increase in the number of Canadians productively employed, a substantial growth in farm income, the reduction in personal income tax provided for in the budget and equal to 12 or 13 per cent, the raising of social benefits, especially of old age security pensions, of family allowances and of other social security benefits.

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The minister continued to say that this 6.8 per cent increase in the real disposable personal income per capita last year in Canada was one and a half higher than that of the United States. Since 1970, the average real disposable income of Canadians has gone up by 21 per cent, that is almost twice more than that of the American people.