

Old Age Security

relation to the price paid on the open market at the time, and the comparatively small return to the primary producer. At that time I questioned the minister about the quantities of the product that were imported, and I also questioned him about the effect it would have on the market. I asked who was responsible for the importation of this product. I was given figures in regard to quantities imported, but never did find out on behalf of those interested, the producers of this country, who were responsible and from whence the authority came for its importation.

Later in the year we found the minister parading around the supermarkets with some of his staff, insulting the housewives of this country by telling them they were spending too much money in this respect and that their cause was not particularly justified. We know that in many cases this is right, and would not complain about it if the primary producers were obtaining the proper return. But that was not the case at that time and is not the case today. The fact is that the return to the primary producers has dropped considerably since then.

In this connection I would refer to the expenditures of the government in several fields. I think of the debate on interim supply that concluded very recently. I think of the amount of tax the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) is taking from the treasury. The minister has put forward arguments about sophistication in the field in which he and his department function and has referred to the equipment that has been purchased.

Nevertheless we are aware, as has been stated many times, that the numbers in the forces are diminishing and that costs are in fact increasing substantially. This is a matter of concern to the Canadian taxpayer, and justifiably so.

These things all add to the inflationary trend with which we are faced these days; they add to the cost of living, which makes life rather difficult for those people at the bottom of the income ladder. I could also bring into this argument the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) and the expenditures of his department in respect of Expo. I place these matters before the house because I believe they are important to the consideration of the motion I shall move. The cost to the taxpayer of all phases of that exposition has added to the inflationary spiral and the high cost of living in this country. Taxation by the government has increased this inflationary spiral.

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I could deal with these matters at great length. As has been mentioned before, the fact that we are soon to have another budget indicates that the government is considering a further increase in taxes. This will require the very close scrutiny of all those sitting on the opposition side of the house. We know that representations are being made to the government to the effect that some restrictions have gone too far. I believe this applies particularly today in the field of housing and building. There must be some rectification in this area.

In essence, Mr. Speaker, the spending program of the government has been contrary to some of the principles they have been endeavouring to apply this session. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) has been responsible for the setting up of a royal commission to inquire into the cost of farm machinery. This indicates that the minister has finally come to the conclusion that there is justification for such an inquiry, because not too many weeks ago he stated he would not allow increases to occur in this field.

Mr. Woolliams: And while the investigation has been going on, those prices have gone up 9 per cent.

Mr. Winkler: I am told that the price of farm machinery has gone up 9 per cent during the course of the investigation. Be that as it may when one brings all these matters together and considers their effect on certain segments of our economy, I believe we are justified in some of the positions we have taken during the session.

Mr. Speaker, I move therefore, seconded by the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale (Mr. Rapp):

That all the words after "that" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

"Consideration be given to granting an immediate increase to all those in receipt of old age pensions without the imposition of a means test, or a needs test, or requiring any disclosure of income or financial resources."

Although, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before allowing the hon. member to proceed, perhaps the Chair should be given an opportunity to consider the amendment proposed by him. I do not wish to interrupt the hon. member immediately; he might continue his speech at least for the time being while the Chair has an opportunity of considering this matter.