

Mortgage Tax Credit

and leans on them for having dared to move to the centre of the city, for whatever the reason may be.

Mr. Chenier: Punished them.

Mr. Stollery: Yes, they are being punished by this government. This government is not good at very many things, and I cannot at the moment think of anything nice that they are good at. They are certainly very good at punishing people who, for reasons beyond their control, find themselves in some form of difficulty. For example, older people whose incomes are not high enough are told by the Prime Minister to tighten their belts. This government penalizes the people who can least defend themselves.

It is worth pointing out to Canadians that while this government is in power they should never put themselves in a weak position or be a member of a group that cannot defend itself vigorously. This government operates more or less as a public relations firm which identifies certain little groups and says, "If we give them some money, we don't have to worry about the other people because they can't defend themselves". That is the kind of approach which this government takes.

Two months after Parliament has reconvened, we still do not have a budget. We have a proposal made in total isolation from the broader economic scene in this country, a proposal that will probably be, as I have said, inflationary and which is copied from the U.S. tax scheme.

Mr. Chenier: A bad copy.

● (1600)

Mr. Stollery: A bad copy. I know that other members have brought up the question of fairness and the fact that this scheme is inequitable. I just want to go over it very briefly once more. This scheme will not create one job. It is probably inflationary. This scheme is a fine, a penalty against people who have paid for their homes and who will pay for the scheme. It is a penalty, a fine, against older people who have for some reason sold their homes because they were too large to keep. It is a penalty against widows in large centres many of whom, if not most, decided at some point to sell their houses because they were too much trouble to keep up and who then moved into apartments. These people are going to be penalized and fined by the government. This is a fine against anyone who happens to like living in an apartment. It is a fine against anyone who wants to live, as has become fashionable, in the downtown areas of our large and great Canadian cities.

The minister in his remarks on Monday of last week spoke about this being a measure to help urban people. He said that for the first time this was a measure not meant for suburban people or people in developments, it was meant for urban people.

I represent an urban constituency. The minister also pointed out that members of his party from urban communities supported this measure. There are not too many members of his party from the central parts of Canadian cities. We all know what happened to "de Cutback" after his six months. We all

[Mr. Stollery.]

know what happened to the sixth-month member from Eglington and the six-month member from Parkdale. Those are parts of urban centres whose residents do not think the scheme was so hot. In any of those ridings you will find thousands of homes paid for by the owners, and in many cases these owners have lived in them for many years. These people saw through the scheme. They knew they were going to get penalized. They knew this during the election campaign. They knew that they were the group that had been identified by these characters over here, and by "plasticman", the convoluted, slipping-through-the-keyhole character that we now have for our Prime Minister. They knew that this group has identified sectors in the community to be penalized, sectors where, if you put a little group together, you would squeeze through even though half a million less voted for them. They knew that and they know it still.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stollery: This gentleman over here—I do not know his name or where he comes from—certainly has a loud mouth. He will not be here long. I ask him to keep it down while I finish my remarks.

I can only say that those of us on this side of the House who try to keep abreast of what this government is not doing are waiting. We are waiting for a decision on energy policy. We are waiting for a budget. We are waiting for the conditions to be evolved that will finally bring down interest rates which the Minister of Finance insists are so temporary.

We read articles in economic journals about interest rates. I quote from such an article the following:

Mr. Peter Sternlight, the man in charge of open market operations at the New York Fed, met dealers in government paper who trooped to Liberty Street for enlightenment with the honest but unnerving reply that "we are in the midst of a learning process ourselves."

This is the attitude that has given us the highest interest rate in the shortest time in Canadian history. We would like the Minister of Finance who is, after all, in charge of the sixth largest economy in the western world to expose us to just some of his original thoughts, to some idea of what kind of economic program he is going to give us. Would he please stop his colleagues in cabinet from giving us one more of these totally irrelevant buy-off-the-voter programs? Though one question the need for increased deficits at this time in our economic history, one certainly wonders about the \$3 billion expense here, and one certainly knows full well that the \$3 billion is going to come from people in the lower income groups in this country. One wonders about that. On the other hand, if a tax cut was proposed in the context of a larger economic picture where we could see some benefit—not just giving people money, not just running the printing presses but as part of an economic program, which the current government said it would bring in, if we could see something like that, then there are those of us who might consider voting for it.

I cannot in all honesty tell my constituents that I support the government in proposing a scheme which very few in my area can possibly benefit from, but which nearly all of them will be