

Adjournment Debate

tax shelters and a longer list of deductions in the calculation of the alternative minimum tax.

What the government has done in the last couple of years attests to its commitment to a fair Canadian tax system. Giving preferential treatment to interest income, as suggested in this motion, would not be consistent with the policy the government has adhered to from the start. Such a change would benefit mainly high income taxpayers, since they have more savings.

To conclude, and for all these reasons, I urge the House to reject private members' Motion M-497.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): There being no further members rising for debate and the motion not being designated a votable item, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Madam Speaker, on October 3, I asked the minister of defence a question pertaining to separation expenses for members of the armed forces. Separation expenses are funds a member of the armed forces may apply for when being posted to a new place of duty away from his or her spouse and dependents.

This money is to temporarily assist the member with new accommodations while separated from his or her spouse and dependents. Temporary is the key word. The member's spouse and dependents are expected to eventually move to the location of the member's new posting.

Canadian forces administrative order 209-3, article 8, states a member may collect separation expenses for up to one year if the new posting will create undue hardship on the member's family and if the member's career manager feels it is in the best interest of the Canadian Armed Forces.

On October 23, I asked the minister why some senior officers were collecting separation expenses for a prolonged period of time. I pointed to two examples. In one case access to information documents show that Major-General Armand Roy, now a lieutenant-general and deputy chief of defence staff, collected separation expenses over a three-year period totalling over \$50,000.

Access to information documents show that Rear Admiral Keeler, the current chief of financial services at national defence headquarters, collected \$86,000 in separation expenses over a four-year period.

• (1840)

I told the minister that by allowing this type of action to continue while able seamen in Esquimalt collect welfare to feed their families was an example of the minister's mismanagement of his portfolio. I asked him how he could allow this to go on under his nose.

The hon. parliamentary secretary for defence stood on behalf of the minister but failed to grasp the meaning of the subject matter at hand. He gave me an answer that dealt with moving expenses. He said I had signed a report supporting the mobility of our soldiers. I was extremely dissatisfied with the parliamentary secretary's answer. I do agree with the mobility for our troops but did not sign any report to that effect.

The parliamentary secretary said that my question hurt the morale of our soldiers. Let me tell the parliamentary secretary, bread lines and welfare cheques hurt the morale of the Canadian Armed Forces, not questions pertaining to Canadian forces administrative orders. He did not address the subject matter at hand. He did not explain why general officers were permitted to collect separation expenses for a prolonged period at a great expense while some soldiers were having trouble feeding their families.

I will put my question again and hope that this time the parliamentary secretary, having had over a month to consider the question, will be able to provide Canadians and members of our armed forces with an answer.

How can the minister allow general officers to collect separation expenses for a prolonged period at great expense when other members of the Canadian Armed Forces are collecting welfare?

Mr. Fred Mifflin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask the hon. member to note that the separation expenses of which he speaks are offered to both officers and non-commissioned members of the Canadian forces to ease the disruption caused by the frequent relocation of Canadian forces members and their families. I believe he is quite familiar with that.

As the member is aware, certain current Canadian forces policies dictate that a member is expected to move their family to the new place of duty within a reasonable time. Should an occasion arise where the move to the new location does not meet personal or service needs, a member may apply to their career manager for an imposed restriction to receive separation expenses.