

The Address—Mr. Stanfield

old age security benefits. We have said, and the hon. gentlemen to my left have said, that these pensions have been seriously eroded or depreciated by inflation, particularly in view of the increased cost of food and shelter. We have proposed immediate provision for increased assistance and we still propose this, but where are my hon. friends on my left now? Where is their concern? What are their intentions? Sir, they did not even wait to ask the government what it proposed to do about old age pensions, what it proposed to do about assistance to the blind or what it proposed to do by way of changing the Unemployment Insurance Act. They did not even wait to find out what the government proposed to do before rushing off and declaring public support for the government on this motion.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, if they do not follow the dictates of their conscience, they cannot avoid the logical conclusion which the Canadian people will draw. It is not a legitimate excuse to suggest, as they have done, that they cannot overthrow the government before spring. Why wait until spring? Since when has democracy become a sport to be practiced in warm weather? The crucial decision which rests with this House is to determine if this government is humane enough and has the necessary ability to govern this country.

[*English*]

The question before the House is whether the government has the trust of the majority of members assembled here and obviously it has not. I have a feeling that the people of Canada do not really expect very much from this government but they do expect something from this parliament. They must be perplexed and puzzled to read that the principal consideration of many hon. members here is for how long and at what price the government can beg or buy support in order to stay in office. The disposition of the parties in the House and the decision of the government to meet parliament has been a matter of fact for more than two months. The Minister of Finance was sent on some kind of search and destroy mission in the guise of seeking organic union. We do not know the result of his efforts or negotiations. We do not know whether, as a result, we will have another and second great Canadian "otto" pact.

Some hon. Members: Hear, Hear!

Mr. Stanfield: However, he has tried and apparently others have, too. Now, we are given to understand that the New Democratic Party, although it is no doubt still interested in the guaranteed annual income, is particularly interested in a guaranteed minimum wait.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I want to say to my hon. friend the leader of the New Democratic Party that his interest and anxiety to see the government's legislation could not possibly be any greater than mine. I do not want to misrepresent my hon. friend's position—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[*Mr. Stanfield.*]

Mr. Stanfield:—but from what he said I assume that he is prepared to sit here for the time being at least, benevolent and benign and apparently motionless, until such time as he has seen the legislation and formed an opinion of it.

I have a series of proposals to express to my hon. friend which I think he cannot very well refuse.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: Point no. 1—

Mr. Lewis: Are you pointing at me now, Bob?

Mr. Stanfield: I am pointing at everybody now. Point no. 1, the Prime Minister should tell the House today what he proposes to do to reduce unemployment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: There is no concrete indication of this in the Speech from the Throne and, as I said, the record of the government on this subject cannot be supported on this motion on the basis that it may produce a satisfactory program when it produces its budget. The hon. member for York South knows as well as I do that there is nothing in the record of this government to justify any such assumption. The Prime Minister cannot make the excuse that he has to wait for the budget; he did not wait for the budget when he announced the pre-Christmas package which the members of the New Democratic Party criticized as earnestly and heartily as did I. Point no. 1 is that the Prime Minister should tell the House today, in concrete terms, what the government proposes to do to increase employment and reduce unemployment.

Point no. 2; the Prime Minister should indicate today what the government proposes to do about reducing income tax rates for 1973.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: Jot these down, Pierre.

Mr. Stanfield: Is the 3 per cent increase to stay in effect? The Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the government have told us very precisely what their intentions are with respect to the rate of corporation income tax during 1973. I ask my hon. friend from York South whether he thinks that individuals are entitled to less information about their tax rates than our Canadian corporations?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Point no. 3 is in regard to legislation in general. The Prime Minister has refused to give a list of the bills that he intends to introduce during this session. I can understand that in a way because he is not sure how long he is going to have the responsibility, but he has given us no idea of the priorities of the government with regard to legislation.

I say that the Prime Minister should tell the House today what the six pieces of legislation are that are highest on the government's list of priorities and which it wants to see introduced and passed. This would give us some idea