

Social Security

represent fruit growing areas such as the Okanagan valley, parts of the province of Ontario and other specific parts of Canada which are affected.

From what we have heard it is clear that it was the intention of the government in the first place, for reasons we have heard already, to give exemptions to transient and migrant labourers who work during the harvesting of seasonal crops. The only difficulty was that the magic number in this case was 25, which obviously was arrived at incorrectly. I agree that it was a good idea that this be given a year's trial; but apparently either the civil servants gave poor advice to the government or were given poor advice themselves, because the magic number 25 should have been 40 in the first place. I believe it is evident that this has caused confusion, because it has been pointed out that migrant labourers, particularly those who come here from the West Indies are promised so much money and are not willing to remain for more than 25 days. This has been dealt with very adequately, and I do not intend to pursue the matter.

The only area in which there is disagreement is in respect of the number 25, which should be increased to 40. I am glad to hear the government is considering changing this. I am glad also to see here at the present time a number of members of the previous parliament who discussed this matter with the then minister of national revenue, the present Minister of Finance. The minister pointed out at that time that it would be necessary to obtain the consent of the provinces in this regard. At that time, when the members of the tobacco board were here in Ottawa discussing this situation, members of the house were critical of the procrastination with regard to getting the matter through before this crop season. There is, however, plenty of time between now and next spring to clear up this situation. I do not foresee any difficulty.

The parliamentary secretary said he hoped that hon. members on all sides of the house would do their best to see that the provincial governments give their consent. I am quite sure he did not mean that very seriously.

● (5:40 p.m.)

I suggest that all the responsible minister would have to do would be to have his secretary contact the ten appropriate officials of the provincial governments, and consent could be obtained in a couple of hours. I cannot imagine any provincial government objecting to something it has already approved in principle, particularly if it is

only the 25 day period that is found to be inappropriate for the reasons we have heard. Between now and next spring I hope the minister will be able to make the ten phone calls. If amendments are necessary I am sure they will receive the immediate approval of this house. As Your Honour is aware, when appropriate amendments are placed before this house they are approved, sometimes in two or three minutes.

I have no additional remarks to make to those presented very ably by the hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand (Mr. Knowles) and the parliamentary secretary. I hope this matter will be expedited.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy LeBlanc (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention and interest to the speech delivered by the mover as well as to those of the two members who spoke before me.

The notice of motion now before us reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of extending from twenty-five to forty days the exemption period for social security, unemployment insurance deductions and taxation deductions presently allowed in the case of migrant agricultural workers.

That motion has perhaps not struck or influenced me the way it did some other members. Maybe I am influenced, which is normal, by the opinion of my fellow citizens in my area, in the constituency I represent. While I think that the mover and the two hon. members who spoke before me deserve our congratulations, I feel that in our region the farmers and the farm workers cannot see that motion in the same light as its mover or other Canadian citizens who live in regions other than mine. I think that we must always consider all those policies from a regional and a global point of view. All the same we get our inspiration from what we see around us.

The hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand (Mr. Knowles) made a very fine speech. Reviewing the background of that legislation, he detailed very skilfully the results obtained in barely a year, as well as those he knew from his personal experience, as I have just learned.

On the other hand, I think that we should think not only about the workers who are in that situation but also about some farmers who live in other regions.

It is well—and I agree with that—to think about the lot and the problems of our students, about the lot of the migrant workers who