

time will come when we must find a way to afford a guaranteed annual income scheme which will wipe out the multiplicity of ineffectual and costly welfare programs and give new dignity to those whose circumstances have rendered them unable to provide adequately for themselves.

In order to provide such vital services there must be drastic reductions in many other areas of government expenditure. I say, let there be a tax cut now, and when the time comes to introduce something like a guaranteed annual income program let us say clearly and unequivocally to the taxpayers of Canada what this program will cost and by what percentage taxes must be increased, and having done so let the voters decide if they will support a party proposing a policy of such expense and magnitude.

[Translation]

Mr. Romuald Rodrigue (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I first wish to commend my hon. colleague, the member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), the mover of this motion which is quite an important one and which expresses in a few words the legitimate demands of my constituents.

The concept of a just and fair society in Canada does not go back to yesterday or 1968. For years people have fought both in Parliament and outside for just and fair society for everyone. It is quite unfortunate that some people or politicians have used this idea as an election slogan and we are led to believe, from their actions, that this was not their purpose but that they were acting in their own personal interests.

Throwing the country into unemployment through credit restrictions, through increases in the rates of interest or measures such as the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials is not what will give us the just society. On the contrary, we are getting further away from it every day.

In order to reach our goal, a just society, new solutions must be found to new problems. Those solutions we have set forth several times, but the government failed to listen and it is our intention to keep on clamouring for the establishment of an economic system that would provide freedom and security for everybody.

Today, 4,000 miles from here in Victoria, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the provincial premiers are meeting at another conference. Discussions at that conference will be somewhat similar to the main idea of the motion now before us because the basic problem in Canada is the economy.

All other matters are after all nothing more than related discussions to solve the economic issue.

● (5:30 p.m.)

As long as the debate relates only to means and leaves the desired objective aside, progress will be minimal and the people will continue to bear the expense of those never-ending conferences that serve no other purpose but the political ends of a few and the division of Canada.

Alleged Non-Institution of Just Society

The mover, the hon. member for Bellechasse, asks for more equitable tax exemptions for individuals. Let us consider the present situation and the prevailing conditions over the last 50 years.

In 1926, individual basic exemptions were \$1,500 while the average national per capita production was \$550. In 1950, basic exemptions had decreased to \$750 and average national production reached \$600. In 1955, individual exemptions were \$1,000 and the average national production reached \$1,700. In 1970, basic exemptions remained at \$1,000 and gross average national production was at \$3,900.

How can the fact be explained that in the last 45 years we have managed to increase our national production, per capita, from \$550 to \$3,900, while the basic exemptions have remained the same? When we compare those of 1926 with those that apply in 1971, the latter are decidedly lower.

The basic exemptions in force in 1926 equalled three times the national production per capita, and after all the changes that have occurred over that long period, we have, in 1970, basic exemptions of \$1,000.

Present exemptions are four times less than the average production, while 45 years ago they equalled three times the average production, per person. While the people made efforts to increase their well-being through services and goods, the government decreased the value of the basic exemptions and deprived the people of the fruit of their labour by lowering the basic personal exemptions for income tax purposes.

The people are overburdened with taxes used to pay ever increasing interests on the national debt. In 1971, we will have to pay in interest alone on the national debt an amount of \$1,995 million.

Instead of bringing forward some effective measures, the government keeps proposing programs which will not solve the problem. This is why, owing to the present inertia of the government, I do not hesitate to say that a Social Credit government would readily grant an income tax exemption of \$3,000 to single persons and a \$5,000 exemption to married persons.

For some years, especially in the past three, the removal of the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials has been demanded by a great many people. Of all the taxes we have known, the sales tax on building materials is one of the most baneful and hateful.

This tax is collected from everyone, but more especially from families with an annual income under \$6,000. A home in Canada has practically become a luxury item that only the well-to-do can hope to enjoy.

The housing situation is bad, at least for numerous Canadians looking for a place to live, including newly married couples, tenants, and especially the poor.

Certainly, there is a minority of privileged people who own their own house and do not have to face the risks of the housing market. These people are fortunate. The ordinary Canadian is not so lucky.