

Oral Questions

ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM—SUGGESTED IMPOSITION OF SURTAX ON INCOME IN EXCESS OF GUIDELINES

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Since, if this program is to have any success, it must appear to the people mostly concerned, those who earn wages and salaries, that it is equitable, that they are not being asked to make sacrifices which people with much higher incomes, self-employed professionals, are able to make, would the Prime Minister look into this question, check what his representatives are proposing, and consider the imposition of a 100 per cent surtax which he seemed to be suggesting when he was talking about taxing away incomes for workers which are more than the guidelines would permit?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Perhaps I should correct an impression which the hon. member has probably gathered through incomplete reporting of what I said on one particular occasion. I indicated there were three ways in which recipients of incomes in excess of the guidelines might be separated from that income. One way, in the case of salaries, would be to take it back by means of deductions from the monthly payments. Another way would be to take it away directly from the salaried persons themselves. It is in that sense I might have used the word taxation in a loose, though, I believe, clearly understandable way. The third method would be to take the excess directly from the employer if the employer were responsible for the settlement over the guidelines. So it is really only a partial view of things to suggest I was embarking on the surtax route.

Mr. Orlikow: In view of the fact that self-employed people are themselves the employers, should not the kind of restriction which the Prime Minister has suggested as applying to people earning wages and salaries be applied to self-employed people, and would not the simple way of doing this be by imposing a 100 per cent surtax so that those who are restricted to a 10 per cent increase would know that professionals, doctors, lawyers, engineers, would not get more than the 10 per cent increase which the Prime Minister thinks is fair?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member is suggesting a technique which various provincial governments will, no doubt, want to examine. If he refers to the white paper—I am returning to his first question today—he will recall that we put it to the provincial governments that they should act in the area of rents and professional fees. They have chosen to do so—

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, you know that in practice professional fees can only be regulated nationally.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member might ask a supplementary.

Mr. Broadbent: Yes, sir!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): This is not the Liberal convention. It is the House of Commons.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind taking a supplementary now if you would allow it. If you would ask the leader of the NDP to supersede his backbencher, I will

[Mr. Trudeau.]

deal with it and then return to the backbencher who has been humbled by the intervention.

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POST OFFICE

STRIKE OF INSIDE WORKERS—REQUEST FOR PROGRAM TO ASSIST BUSINESSMEN—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Postmaster General. It arises from the present state of negotiations between the government and the postal union, the union negotiators being prepared to bargain and the government saying that its offer is a final offer. Is the government now prepared to consider a program designed to assist innocent third parties whose businesses and livelihood are affected by the failure of mail deliveries?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): I am not unaware of the hardship caused to small businessmen who use the mail. I am pleasantly surprised at the support they have given to me. I suppose they prefer strikes in the Post Office in future to be confined to the legal periods of time rather than illegal strikes every few months. This was the impression given me by one of the recognized leaders in the direct mail business this morning.

It is wrong to presume there is no ground for further negotiation. We can always negotiate certain monetary features of the collective agreement downward or spread it among certain members of the postal union who are not benefitting as much as people in the higher classifications. If that is what they prefer, I would be more than happy to do it.

Mr. Horner: The hon. gentleman has given a good account of the exact state of the negotiations but it seems he failed to understand the purport of my question. Is the government considering making assistance available to innocent third parties who are affected by the inability of the mail to get through?

Mr. Mackasey: That is not a question which I can answer categorically, though I would like to do so, because I am aware that we are dealing, here, with a real problem. I can only say I have had several discussions with people in that particular area to ascertain what type of benefit they would consider the most tangible. If policy is needed in this general area, then I can only make general recommendations to my colleagues.

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URBAN AFFAIRS

CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AT VANCOUVER—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF ADEQUATE FUNDING

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. I believe he has been given notice. Since the minister has been unable to assure Vancouverites that adequate federal funds will be available for Habitat Forum and since the latest issue of Habitat Bulletin, which is