

Act, and the increase of \$30 under the guaranteed income supplement will be treated as income, so the net result for the veteran will be one big fat zero. This is generosity across the board!

• (1520)

Now, I ask the Minister of Finance if he intends to bring in an amendment to correct this injustice because it is pure, unadulterated injustice and discrimination against the category of veterans entitled to this type of coverage. It may be that this was an unfortunate lapse in thinking, but I ask this administration, which is not distinguished by the number of veterans in it, to look at this particular problem. This concerns the debt of one generation to another. The taxpaying Canadians in general owe a debt to our senior citizens of age 65—and this is being recognized more and more—I suggest to everyone who was not a veteran either by reason of age or choice that there is a debt owing to the veterans of this country and this administration will stand condemned if it does not make the necessary changes in that regard.

Mr. Mahoney: What increases did the Tories give the veterans?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I will speak directly to the hon. member from Calgary South. I ask that hon. member—and I had the honour to serve in the regiment of his city—to look at the record of those administrations with regard to veterans.

Mr. Mahoney: You did not raise the pensions once.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, to have a minister of the Crown sit in his seat and make remarks which show precisely how wide the gap is between his ears is a disgrace to the administration. I will be charitable and say he is merely mistaken through ignorance. He could not possibly mislead the House.

Now, having said that I want to move to another item in the budget speech of the minister. He referred to percentages and worried about the escalation in the cost of living. Percentages were used. In all the press releases which have been issued by government departments and by his predecessor Minister of Finance, the performance of the economy has been given in percentage figures.

The government says that the cost of living has increased about 3.6 per cent in the last year. That is fraudulent misrepresentation all the way. If hon. gentlemen will only take a look at the tables of the consumer price index they will see that a five point increase, which is bad, becomes a smaller percentage figure because the base is increasing. Let us take a look. We have releases indicating that the consumer index is up 4½ per cent since April, 1971 and is up 0.6 per cent compared with March 1972. But, the real increase is six points in the consumer price index. I say to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) and any minister that when there is an increase of six points in the cost of living index, whether you start from base 100 or from base 133, it is still an increase in prices of six points and not a diminution of percentages. This is the point. I am not a mathematical numbskull.

The Budget—Hon. M. Lambert

Mr. Francis: That is clear.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): All right. Government Representatives always speak of percentages.

Mr. Francis: It is 3.6 per cent.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The base is 100. Let us not have the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) cavil about this. He showed his ignorance on the last item and I will take him through this one, too. If it is six points on 100, let us wait five years at the present rate and we will be up to 175. What does six points mean with a figure of 175? It means a much lower percentage and the government will preen its feathers. The government will be happy. But I tell the hon. member for Okanagan-Boundary, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howard), that he will know about this because his pocket and his wife's housekeeping budget will suffer the same sort of debilitation. It will mean that his wife will be able to buy less and that the hon. member will be able to buy less than when the figure was 100.

It is the points which count, not the percentage. The hon. member has made a fatuous assertion and has taken an indefensible position because food prices have gone up 9.2 points since April, 1971. If hon. members do not believe this, let them read the statistics in the Bank of Canada Review for the month of April. They will see that in the general index for the end of April last year, food stood at 132.2 and at the end of April this year it stood at 138.2. When we mention food, I have to make this particular point. What are the senior citizens primarily concerned about? Of course, it is food, clothing and shelter. I would invite the Minister of Finance and any other of his disbelieving colleagues, to show me where the concentration in the consumer price index increase is, if it is not in food, clothing and shelter. It is 9.2 points in respect of food. It is 7.3 points in respect of shelter and 8 points in respect of other services these people get. We have heard this administration saying that in 1971 there was no more than a 3.6 per cent increase in the cost of living. That is a deliberate deception of the public; it is using another version of the figures because percentages are always calculated on an ever increasing base. The results are usually bound to come out as a lesser figure. I just want to put on record that no one should be fooled by this alleged percentage increase in the cost of living index.

• (1530)

Now, I will talk about another point that I made and that my colleagues will make shortly, particularly the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) when he speaks about personal tax cuts and the matter of unemployment. Others will speak about certain changes in the Income Tax Act, and the list of omissions is long. I will go through some of the undertakings made by the previous minister of finance which have gone unanswered in this budget. I have spoken about inflation. The Leader of the Opposition and others will speak about unemployment. If I were to list all the omissions in the budget I would be here until eight o'clock tonight, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) could not stand me for that long.