

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

I hope that the minister will explain this question in a way that will be satisfactory to the veterans concerned and I hope, also, that he will tell us by what authority this has been done. Is it under the authority of the War Veterans Allowance Act? Where can we find that authority? Veterans have been told that if they do not apply for a guaranteed income supplement, they will be treated as if they have done so.

A great fuss and to-do was made when the guaranteed income supplement was brought in, and it was said that it would not be affected by moneys received by way of war veterans pension or war veterans allowance payments. Just the reverse actually happens. Once you get the guaranteed income supplement, that affects the war veterans allowance. Most of us in the House think that this is not fair treatment. The whole issue will come before us when we discuss the proposal to increase the war veterans allowance rates. I hope that tonight the minister will have for us an explanation that will be satisfactory to the veterans. They are concerned and they deserve an explanation.

**Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, on December 2 last, when I had the pleasure of announcing a 10 per cent increase in the basic rate of veterans disability pension and a 15 per cent increase in war veterans allowance, both effective April 1 next, I also announced a change in procedure.

I pointed out that the regulations would be changed to provide that WVA recipients who are also eligible for old age security and the guaranteed income supplement would be deemed to be receiving the full amounts to which they are entitled under those programs. The allowances of these persons would then be adjusted to supplement their OAS and GIS payments to bring their incomes up to the new WVA ceilings. This use of funds available under the Old Age Security Act provides one of the means of financing the proposed increases in rates of war veterans allowances.

Accordingly, last month notices were sent to veterans affected and also to civilian war allowance recipients advising them to make application for benefits under the Old Age Security Act if they had not already done so. They were reminded of the importance of making this application in order to avoid a loss of income. The new procedure is to be effective as of April 1, the same date as the increases. Some details are still being worked out, but the change will be effected through amendments to the war veterans regulations and the civilian war allowance regulations, which will be available before the effective date.

May I add, Mr. Speaker, that the change in procedure will be handled in a humane and reasonable way and as flexibly as the circumstances permit. For example, in the case of a veteran who made application for GIS before April 1, but is not yet receiving it, the procedural change will be postponed until the Department of National Health and Welfare begins his GIS payments. These particular will be spelled out in the regulations. Furthermore, treatment rights of these veterans will be pre-

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

served through amendments to veterans treatment regulations. As to income tax, of course I cannot anticipate future government fiscal policy but past performance would indicate that this matter will be taken into account.

It is difficult to answer in three minutes all the questions the hon. member has raised, but I have done my best in the circumstances.

*[Translation]*

## INCOME TAX—NEW ASSESSMENTS FOR 1968 AND 1969

**Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf):** Mr. Speaker, the question I asked on February 17, which appears on page 3482 of *Hansard*, was based on a request from my constituents who wanted me to make their views known about the income tax return forms which were addressed to them recently.

If some thieves are notorious on account of their craftiness or cleverness, such is not the case with this government which shows a lack of imagination on the part of its Department of National Revenue.

In point of fact, Canadians are robbed in broad daylight by the Department of National Revenue. The minister with his relatively large staff recently decided that during the department's slack periods, some files would be reviewed, and I was told the following on that subject by a departmental officer in a letter dated February 15:

The control of claims for expenditures incurred away from home is part of our ordinary auditing. During the year, we expect to check 9,000 such claims for the whole of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the persons mostly affected in my riding of Portneuf up to now, because of this new procedure, are truck drivers. Once more, the government is after one of the most hard-working classes. Once more, the government is after an active and alert group to which we owe a great part of the economic activity in this country.

The government is getting after people who, apart from being away from home 95 hours a week, must very often sleep in their trucks. This class is at a disadvantage because under the new rules, the government forbids them to deduct the price of a meal a day, which they were allowed to do during the years 1968-69.

Among the dozens of persons who wrote to me to tell me of their problems, I shall mention the special case of a man who drives his truck between Portneuf and Montreal and back again.

Since the worker must leave home at three a.m. to come back at 9 p.m. on the same day, it often happens that he takes three meals daily outside home. Having travelled between Portneuf and Montreal during 265 days in 1968, he had given the approximate cost of his meals that is \$1.15 for breakfast, \$1.65 for dinner and \$1.75 for supper, the total cost figured for his meals on his income tax return amounting to \$760, an amount which had then been accepted. But in November 1970, the Income Tax Branch of the Department of National Revenue sent him the following letter: