

Guaranteed Minimum Income

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of the private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper, namely, Notices of Motion, Public Bills.

• (5:00 p.m.)

[Translation]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

GUARANTEED MINIMUM INCOME

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the possibility of passing a law under which every Canadian citizen, who is without work or other source of income, would receive a guaranteed minimum income as a way of recognizing, in a special fashion, the dignity, the value and the economic rights of the human being, in the context of the economic life of the nation, that the amount required for the payment of the guaranteed minimum income be derived from the national product so as to increase neither the taxes on individuals and companies, nor the cost of living, nor the price of any product or service; that this measure could, with advantage, replace the contributions and payments of all the systems of unemployed insurance, social welfare, family and personal allowances, Canada Pensions and Quebec Pensions, that the economic recognition of the guaranteed minimum income would be to the greatest advantage of all the citizens of Canada, and, at the same time, would be of great benefit to all the principal sectors of the national economy.

He said: Mr. Speaker, about this notice of motion which I put on the order paper on October 28, 1969, I take it as my responsibility to express my views because this concerns the fate of two thirds of the Canadian people without income.

Since first we heard the promises of the government, especially those of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), about the establishment of a just society, we can wonder when will come the measures which were to follow.

We have been told about various bills on tax reform, but we must admit that Parliament has not done anything to help the majority of Canadians.

Royal commissions have been created and they have submitted their reports, pointing out to us structural and regional disparities. Some reports also dealt with periodic fluctuations and even recommended the retraining of some workers. But those recommendations all reflect the influence of a clique.

While computers do the work of accountants and office clerks, and machines replace

workers, unfortunately there are still dreamers within the Canadian administration who keep the possibility of a full-employment policy alive.

While financing costs and taxes of all kinds increase the prices of goods and services that are essential to our survival, those who are responsible for those increases are talking about a plan to ensure a reasonable price stabilization. To distract the people from the real conditions, even economists contradict themselves publicly about the causes of poverty in a prosperous society.

If we consider that the Canadian citizens are always caught between a heavy production on the one hand and a low purchasing power on the other, it is obvious that a slight change must be made in the distribution of the purchasing power in the specific areas where it is lacking, that is among the Canadian citizens who do not have a sufficient income.

We feel that the guarantee of a national dividend which would cover the essential needs, food, clothing and housing, is perfectly workable today, due to the present conditions of Canadian production.

Thanks to the advent of automation and cybernetics as well as the application of new production techniques, we consider that the productive labour of mankind is becoming increasingly useless and is replaced by equipment in plants which are increasingly automated.

In an open letter to President Johnson, American economists and sociologists stated that the first condition to be fulfilled in order to prevent economic and social disorder in the present state of production, which eliminates human labor without succeeding in reemploying the worker to good advantage, is simply to ensure to each individual and to each family a minimum guaranteed income as a basic right.

Even though wages and salaries might bring sufficient income to all of the 8,500,000 Canadian citizens actively engaged in production, there remains an unbalance due to the other 13,000,000 Canadians without income. This is the gap which must be filled without however taxing those who get an income from work or from personal wealth. The only thing necessary is therefore to determine a set and guaranteed minimum for the 13,000,000 Canadians who are too young, too old, sick, crippled, blind or unemployed, who are all entitled to it.