

Gordon M. Dodge

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LETTER WRITTEN BY J.D. NEILL TO HON. EDGAR BENSON - cont'd
from last week's News

The Provincial and Federal Government's policy on Indian Welfare is shocking. Together they accomplish nothing towards providing the native Indian with a better standard of living yet millions of dollars have been spent in this field. The only worthwhile monies spent, in this writer's opinion, have been in the field of providing secondary education for native Indian students by bringing them into the larger centres and providing them with education, room and board.

In this area alone the Federal Government has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars constructing GOOD homes for native Indians, not one of which is today fit to live in. The native Indian has accepted this kind donation by the great white father as his due and once he has taken possession has promptly burnt the doors and cupboards in the house for firewood, rather than venture out into the cold for dead wood. Both the Federal and Provincial Government have contributed jointly in excess of \$10,000 per annum to the local Indian Friendship centre and in two years the centre has done nothing towards improving the Indian's lot but has provided a bulletin board for hate literature, neatly pinned on by representatives of the CYC.

The Federal and Provincial governments policy on welfare, MUST, in the name of all that is reasonable, be re-examined. For example local recipients of welfare-able-bodied men, were asked by the local authorities to perform two days work per week on civic necessities - snow and gravel shovelling, etc., the authorities in Toronto learned of this by complaints filed by the welfare recipients and promptly ordered the local authorities to stop this practice of forcing poor relief recipients to work for their living. The welfare recipients, Sir, are quite frankly laughing at us and have become quite skilled at ways of lengthening their stay on the rolls.

The Federal government is distributing hundreds of thousands of dollars in Old Age pensions - without a means test. This is not fair. If this is to be gradually implemented with the Canada Pension Plan, then this inequity will disappear so that the money will not be paid out where none has been paid in except in cases of indigents. But if a means test were established now for the Old Age pension scheme then the poor could receive more and raise their standard of living rather than having the rich receive this money needlessly. The same situation exists with the Family Allowance and Youth Allowance program.

There are many other areas in government spending where waste is obvious, but I see no point in further elaborating here. I believe I have made my point with the foregoing.

With respect to declaration of all types of income, the field of income possibilities can be expanded far beyond the brief examples already quoted, but those examples quoted

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certainly should be examined, because the in the case of dance band musicians the average annual income is at least \$500.00 per annum and often greater, the average small town fireman's income is at least \$250.00 and mostly \$500.00 per annum. With respect to cleaning women, suffice it to say that the cleaning woman in my office who earns \$250.00 per year from me and is therefore not reportable enjoys a colour TV set in her home and is busy approximately 50 hours per week with several different employers and also enjoys a regular mothers allowance cheque from the Provincial Government.

I believe it will be obvious to the Minister that if the foregoing examples of undeclared income and unnecessary expenditures can be drawn from this small community where I reside - 3000 population - then ample evidence of this same kind of wrong must exist in Canada's larger centres all of it well known to various government officials, but obviously being largely ignored.

It, of course, stands to reason that these inequities are not only known to the writer but all Canadian taxpayers and when the government announces proposed increases in taxation rather than scheduled cuts in spending, those taxpayers whom the proposals affect will almost invariably be tempted to effect their own form of savings-tax evasion. Tax evasion is certainly against the law but is it any more morally wrong than a government which does nothing to curb wastefully spending of public monies?

Governments, in a democracy, are elected to positions of trust by the voters-to guide their country's affairs in a wise and just manner. I suggest that an elected government is betraying that trust when it does not do everything in its power to curb wasteful spending and see that every citizen of the country it governs contributes in a fair and just manner to the cost of good government.

Taxpayers across Canada cannot help but feel their hackles raised when they read of government surplus assets sold at ridiculously low prices in a market where goods of less than equal value are sold at twenty times the price, when they read of vacation trips being made by the Prime Minister in an official government plane-at the taxpayers expense, when they see the Government run medical insurance costs more and does less and is predicted to go higher than a privately run medical insurance scheme supervised by the physicians themselves.

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