

*Adjournment Debate*

Canadians perceive the gulf of disparity to be widening under this Conservative Government. There is a line between the rich and the poor, between the various classes in our society. We have had struggles in this country between federal and provincial Governments. We have had struggles between the East and the West. We have had struggles along linguistic lines, between French Canada and English Canada. We have found ways to resolve the struggle. However, what we have never had in this country, and what Canadians hope will never happen, is a struggle based on class stratification. Yet that is becoming more pronounced. It is not like what we see on our television sets in Great Britain and other parts of the world, but it is beginning to happen on our own doorstep. When we have people lining up at churches for food vouchers and hand-outs there is something wrong. We cannot afford to put in place programs which will fuel class stratification. Yet some of the programs in these two Budgets are doing exactly that.

I see that you are telling me my time is up, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue with unanimous approval of the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

• (1800)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** I'm not too sure, but I do not think there is unanimous consent.

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 66 deemed to have been moved.

### SOCIAL SECURITY—PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS FOR GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT. (B) REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL GUARANTEE

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, there are 67,500 Guaranteed Income Supplement applications to be processed in the regional Health and Welfare office in Regina. In January of 1986 we were informed that the usual 27 temporary staff would not be available this year to make sure that the job was done by the time the April cheques were to be issued. I raised the issue in the House on February 4, 1986, and the Minister did not deny the fact that fewer people would be available for this processing. He indicated that an inset would ensure that no one went without their GIS cheques in April. Since February 4, however, most of the temporary help has been made available, and it appears that most of the

applications will be processed, but a few will be disappointed by not receiving their cheques in April.

However, the concern about service has not gone away. Just today we were informed that the two client service centres in Ontario, one in Scarborough and one in Oakville, have been closed or are to be closed from March 31. They are to be closed permanently. The employees of Health and Welfare, like other members of the Public Service, are being told that they cannot have job security. The result is likely to be further disruption of service in the form of strikes and possibly other labour action.

The real reduction in service is not from action on the part of the employees, but because the Government is embarked upon a process of reducing and cutting service. The Nielsen report probably embodies the main theme of this Government in cutting. If there is not a monetary return on investment, an investment should not be made. That theme is cutting into the service which the country has learned to expect from the Government of Canada. I ask the Minister to review his process of reduction of service by cutting, as he did in Regina and other service centres across the country earlier this year. Recognizing the folly of his ways, I suppose, he refilled those positions so that the GIS applications could be processed. I ask him to provide enough people to minimize the hurt of the people for whom he is responsible, the old people, the young people, and the ailing. Those are the people for whom the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) is responsible. Every time he cuts a program, every time he cuts a centre, he is reducing the service that is provided to that group, the old, the young and the ailing.

• (1805)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to give the Hon. Member and all recipients of the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Spouse's Allowance and their families, the assurance that the current number of employees is sufficient to process all renewal applications on time.

As the Hon. Member pointed out during the February 4 Question Period, the number of temporary staff hired this year to process the annual renewal applications is lower than last year's. However the figures he gave are inaccurate and I would like to correct them because the Hon. Member's statement may have left the impression that the Department will be hard pressed to process the renewal applications on time. The Hon. Member claims that this year the Regina income security programs regional office has hired only two temporary employees as compared with 27 last year. In fact, 18 temporary employees were hired this year as compared with 22 last year.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) is convinced that such small staff reductions will not prevent the