

Supply

Ontario, Action Now in Saskatchewan, the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation, the Association of Jewish Seniors, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the National Anti-Poverty Organization, the National Council of Welfare, the Government's own National Advisory Council on Aging and numerous other groups. My colleagues and I in the New Democratic Party are going to make sure that the Prime Minister and the Government get the message. This unfairness to Canada's seniors must be stopped.

I say again that the New Democrats have launched a cross-country campaign for the reindexation of pensions. Our Party has fought tirelessly to ensure that Canadians could and would retire in dignity. That is our commitment. The Prime Minister and Conservative Members have broken faith with Canadians, and in the coming days and weeks, the New Democrats will continue to fight to have full indexation of old age pensions restored.

I know that the constituents of Conservative Party Members have begun to call Conservative Party Members to place their objections before them. I ask Members of all Parties to consider that. In the Tory caucus, there is an excellent opportunity for Conservative Members to go nose to nose with the Ministers who are doing this to the constituents whom Tory Members are supposed to represent. Conservative Members have an opportunity to join with the New Democratic Party to say to the Government that enough is enough and we ain't going to take it any more.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I have a very short question to ask the Hon. Member. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) has been saying that he has spoken with a number of different individuals and groups about the deindexing of pensions. I know that my friend, the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), has also been travelling around the country meeting with certain groups. I was wondering if he would be prepared to share with us the observations that he has made as he has come into contact with seniors' groups and particularly with a number of seniors' groups in western Canada.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to do so. First, I should say that last weekend, in response to what the government Members were saying, which was that they believed that the seniors of the country supported what the Government was doing, just out of curiosity I visited two senior citizens' apartment buildings in my constituency. I knocked on every door and told those who answered that I was there to talk about Old Age Security and what the Government was doing. I did not have to say anything more. I had a petition with me, and every single pensioner signed that petition. Members of my caucus went back to my constituency the same weekend and got exactly the same response.

Yesterday I went to Regina and Moose Jaw to attend a convention of the Action Now group, the seniors' umbrella group in Saskatchewan. Senior citizen after senior citizen had no hesitation in saying to me that what the Government was doing was wrong, that it was obvious that the Government is in

the pocket of big business and that it was not listening to the senior citizens of the country. They said that the only groups the Government is interested in listening to are the big corporations, the Bay Street boys and the oil companies. If senior citizens are saying that to me, they are most certainly saying the same thing to Conservative Members who were elected to represent the interests of the people of their constituencies. By not speaking up and opposing this action, they are in violation of their duties.

Mr. Ravis: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young) with great interest. I would like to tell a little story that goes back to August of last year when I visited a senior citizens' home, St. Anne's, in Saskatoon. One lady there asked me if the Government could bring about economic recovery so that people could get back to work and start paying their taxes again so that the Government could afford to pay seniors their pensions. It seems to me that she put the whole issue in a nutshell. She understood that her pension cannot come from a printing press but that it had to come from an economy with some substance and foundation.

I am not very happy about sharing the burden of this debt. Senior citizens are not happy, corporations are not happy and people who earn over \$40,000 per year who are being surtaxed are not happy. However, when we took office last fall, it was made very clear to us that the debt was about to wreck the country. As someone said not too long ago, let us try to make some decisions in this Parliament while we can still make decisions. If we do not make them now, the decision-making power will be taken away from us and put in the head offices of banks and lending institutions outside this country.

Has the Hon. Member for Beaches really given this issue a broad view or is he just zeroing in on one particular item? I agree with the Hon. Member that everyone has a burden to share. I would like to think that those senior citizens who are able to help us share the burden will do so. We look forward to their assistance. I would be very happy to hear from any senior citizen in my constituency who cannot afford to pay 27 cents per day, because I would like to talk to that senior citizen.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to reply to the Hon. Member. Members who have been Members as long as I have know that I always take the broad view of things.

Mr. Andre: Yeah?

Mr. Young: I am totally unbiased and I take an objective point of view.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): From a socialist point of view, you are right.

Mr. Young: The Minister of National Health and Welfare knows that. Usually I do not find myself in disagreement with the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. Andre: At least you're smiling.