

*Supply*

against the Budget, defeat the Government and cause an election to take place.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hawkes:** One year later the organization that looks after the interests of those in poverty in Canada put out a public document that said the Crosbie Budget was the fairest budget to poor people that had been presented to this Parliament in the decade of the 1970s. Yet the Liberals and NDP voted against it and took it away from the poor people of this nation. Now I stand in this House and I say the millionaires of this country do not need the family allowance, they do not need the OAS, which is non-contributory pension, they will be glad to donate those back to the public treasury so the poor people of this nation can benefit from that money. I am proud to stand here and vote for it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Guarnieri:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the Member turned a deaf ear to my pleas of fairness. But I notice that the Member did use the term fairness quite liberally.

I would like to ask the Member a question, if I may beg the indulgence of this House, as to where the fairness is for a family with two children in which both parents work and both earn \$40,000 in income. They will not be forced to repay any of the family allowance payments which they receive since neither parent has a net income of \$50,000. In contrast, a family that earns \$60,000 net income will be forced to repay part or all of the family allowance it receives. I would love to hear the answer.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to allow the Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) a short time to answer?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)):** Thank you Mr. Speaker for the opportunity to speak today about a subject that is fundamental to defining who we are as Canadians and how we are different from other countries—the social security system in Canada. Canadians can rightly be proud of the network of social programs in

this country. They justifiably point to the impressive safety net that protects the weakest in our society. Yet the diverse system of programs is still flexible enough to meet the needs of all Canadians.

We place great emphasis on our health and social services and have done so for many years. Many Canadians are too young to remember the days when Canada did not have a universal medicare program. We are proud of the fact that each and every Canadian has the right to medical service.

We also have an extensive network of income security programs. We provide Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplements and Canada Pension Plan benefits to the elderly. We support families with children through Family Allowances and income tax provisions for Child Care. The unemployed benefit from a generous Unemployment Insurance program.

This Government continues to be fully committed to securing this network of social programs now and in the future. We have the courage to take the steps necessary to ensure that future generations of Canadians can also benefit from an extensive system of social support as we benefit from it today.

What threatens this system of social support is our enormous national debt estimated to be over \$320 billion in 1988–89. As a result of this debt, over 35 cents on every dollar of revenue collected by the federal government will go to paying interest on that debt in 1989–90.

We will spend \$39 billion on interest payments. That is the single largest component of federal Government expenditures, larger than expenditures on all social programs.

It is imperative that we face the challenge of the debt problem today in order to preserve the basis for our system of social programs in the future.

• (1430)

To turn away from this problem is to continue to borrow from the future and to seriously endanger the economic and social future of our children.

Only 20 years ago, Canada had no deficit. Our entire national debt, accumulated over the first century of Confederation, was only \$18 billion. How then did Canada manage to acquire this enormous debt? Like any