

*Government Orders*

all programs such as old age security, Canada pension, unemployment insurance and medicare.

I think it is very interesting to look at the comments of the chairman of the finance committee. It is interesting because it is not the first time that this member has spoken up and laid before us through one of his foot-in-mouth comments what the true agenda of this government is. He has told us in a letter to a person from Alberta that this is simply the start of the dismantling of the universality of our social programs. We know that that is correct.

We can look at some of the others, but do not take my word for it. Let me just refer to a few others. A person from my riding in Penticton says that one of the things that a person counts on when planning for retirement is that no one will move the pension goal post, so to speak, at the time when that person has reached retirement age and is no longer able to revise his or her provisions for retirement. Universality of the OAP is one of those goal posts.

We can look to other organized groups such as the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation. They tell us that the Minister of Finance claims that the clawback proposal is not a breach of universality of the OAS program. He bases the claim on the continuance of monthly pension cheques to all qualified recipients, using a very narrow school boy logic type of approach. A few people might buy this claim, seniors do not. The fact of making payments under one act and then recovering them under a different act of Parliament does not change the basic truth. We see it as a transparent move to abandon universality by a circuitous route. There is no doubt about it. That in fact is what is happening.

The Federal Superannuates National Association states as follows, "In the case of pension plan arrangements particular to past and present employees of the Public Service of Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the present arrangements in regard to integration of Canadian Pension Plan and Public Service plans were only agreed to by employees' representatives in light of an assurance by government that Old Age Security would be paid univer-

sally, without restriction. If there had been any indication that OAS would, under particular financial circumstances, be abated or denied, the integration of CPP benefits would, for certain, have been vastly different from the present arrangements. There is no doubt in our mind that government is under a moral obligation to maintain the *status quo*".

I had a telex, Madam Speaker, from the South Okanagan branch of the Federal Superannuates National Association in Penticton, British Columbia. They state, "Federal superannuates and their dependants object strongly to the budget proposal to introduce special tax on Old Age Security benefits. To target this particular source of income for extra taxation can only be seen as a flagrant repudiation of the doctrine of universality of these benefits". This is another group that has shown us that this is an attack on universality.

As the chairman of the finance committee well knows, the government is going to dismantle what all of us have fought for.

Let me go on, Madam Speaker. The Coalition of Quebec Seniors states, "As seniors we remember well the odious means test for health and social services and fear for its inevitable return if the clawback is enacted in law. We believe that the true reason for the clawback is to abandon the principle of universality and not to reduce the budget deficit".

In talking about the cut-backs, the Vanier Institute of the Family state, "Time and again the objectives of universal family allowances are mistakenly equated with the income security objectives of social assistance payments. It is wrong to suggest that family allowances are nothing more than welfare for the middle-class and the wealthy. Family allowances and family-related tax provisions are not welfare measures. They are, rather, mechanisms to ensure an equitable system of benefits and taxation that acknowledges that the capacity of parents to pay tax is less than the capacity of others at the same income level who do not have children to support. C-28, if and when enacted, does without doubt effectively terminate Canada's universal program of family allowances. If and when it is enacted, Canada will join the United States, which is the only other industrially ad-