

complex. One thing is clear, though: it does benefit only the wealthy.

This is a bill that rewards upper income Canadians. What we want to see is pension reform that benefits all Canadians. This bill proposes to provide the greatest assistance to those at the upper end of the income scale. Someone earning \$20,000 a year would get an annual RRSP break of about \$1,200. Someone earning \$86,000 a year would get a tax break of \$7,500.

One clever newspaper editorial in a Toronto paper said:

We agree that everyone should be treated equitably, but we don't accept Wilson's fundamental premise that the taxpayer has an obligation to help the wealthiest Canadians maintain their lifestyles in retirement especially since they have the means to do so without government help.

Wilson's proposal, when fully implemented, would drain an estimated \$300 million a year from the federal Treasury, which Wilson has previously said, on numerous occasions, is stretched to the limit.

This piece of legislation will cost the public Treasury \$300 million. At the same time the finance minister keeps whining about financial restraint. He uses financial restraint as the excuse to attack our social programs.

If he suddenly found \$300 million kicking about, why not put it into the Guaranteed Income Supplement? That would allow Canada to give \$30 a month more to the more than 600,000 elderly, widowed and single women who have no other source of income and who are living below the poverty line. Thirty dollars a month does not sound like much, but it can mean the difference between having to rely on charity and being independent for many widowed and single older women.

This legislation has serious consequences for those Canadians who were unable to save for their retirement because of other spending commitments such as raising children or simply because they could not afford to put money away.

Taxation statistics show us that a majority of people making over \$50,000 a year contribute to RRSPs. The percentage of tax filers who do contribute to RRSPs is shown to be directly proportional to their income levels. RRSPs can provide a supplement to retired incomes, but

we cannot rely on RRSPs alone to provide an adequate pension income for most Canadians.

The route the government is taking on pension reform is really very disturbing. It is leaving those who are most needy out of this discussion altogether. It is ignoring middle income earners. This is the third step this government has taken after attempting to deindex pensions, after the successful clawback of pensions, toward the privatization of our pension system.

This move will leave poor seniors, and especially older women, with even less income than they currently have. It is no coincidence that the changes dealing with the tax treatment of retirement savings were introduced in conjunction with the proposal to deindex Old Age Security. The deindexation would have cost Canadian pensioners \$255 million in 1986 alone.

What the finance minister is attempting is to privatize our pension system completely. This government has already tried to deindex pensions. It failed because of overwhelming opposition from seniors working actively in lobby organizations and groups right across this country, and from the opposition of the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons. That was the first attack this government made on our pension system.

The logic behind that, and this move that we see before us today, is to force Canadians to rely solely on their own savings for their retirement. There are many seniors, women who have spent most of their lives as homemakers, who do not have such savings. This does not make their contribution to Canada any less.

Canada owes them a decent standard of living in their old age. Many of these women are from a generation where the most common thing was for a woman to stay and work in the home. These women come from a generation in which there were more children per family. It was hard work, especially without the kinds of services and amenities that we have today. It is unfair to turn our backs on these women now and say: "You are on your own".

Canadians who have worked all their lives at low wage jobs do not have much savings or opportunity for savings. It is hard enough to live on the minimum wage, let alone put money away for a retirement savings plan. Any savings that middle income earners and lower income earners have go into their children's education. These