

S.O. 21

Government has gone wild with our tax dollars. It destroys small business and jobs, with taxation and regulation. It threatens to destroy the very fibre of our economic base with its lack of accountability and total disregard for managing the Government's purse strings.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

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● (1410)

POLITICAL PARTIES

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY—SOCIAL SECURITY POLICIES

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, oh, the high priest of all things mean, tough, and nasty, the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), finance critic for the Conservative Party, recently announced his Party's policy on family allowances and old age pensions. The Conservatives would go back to the days of means tested benefits, forcing senior citizens and poor women to suffer the indignity of detailed examination of all of their income and assets, by snooping public servants.

The CCF and NDP, and in particular pioneers such as the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and J. S. Woodsworth, fought long and hard for decent pensions and family allowances. We have called, for example, for an immediate 25 per cent increase in universal old age pensions and increases in the GIS to bring poor, elderly Canadians, a high proportion of whom are women, above the poverty line.

Given the new Conservative policy as announced by the Conservative finance critic, it is no wonder that Maureen McTeer recently said:

Because of the type of people who supported the present leader, there is a nervousness . . . there is a tendency . . . to think the Party is moving backwards.

Under the mean, tough, and nasty hand of the Hon. Member for St. John's West and his Conservative colleagues, women and senior citizens will be the first victims. Burnaby women and seniors, beware!

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EMPLOYMENT

RE-EDUCATION PLAN TO COPE WITH TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Mr. Stanley Hudecki (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, a national advisory panel to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) has developed a 10-year plan designed to help re-educate our nation in order to cope with technological change. The plan calls for the Government to take immediate action to implement programs to reduce illiteracy among Canadians, and to create programs to cope with growing job obsolescence.

The proposed scheme would provide employees with time off to take courses which would improve their skills or retrain

them for other jobs. Employees would earn the time off as they now earn vacation pay or sick leave. A tax credit for employers participating in the program would mean that public funds could be used to help workers retrain. At the same time this would help relieve the unemployment rate by paying for unemployed workers to be hired on a fill-in basis. I urge the Government to give considerable priority to this proposal as it offers a progressive model for the lifelong learning process which I believe would benefit the Canadian work force.

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AGRICULTURE

WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION ACT—DEMAND FOR AMENDMENT

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Government is again betraying the western farmer. The Liberal Minister, when introducing the Western Grain Stabilization Act, told western producers that the fund would provide a cash flow in times of need. In 1982 western grain farmers suffered a loss of income, and they suffered another loss in 1983. Last year 154 prairie farms went bankrupt, with hundreds more on the verge of bankruptcy.

The complicated formula used in the Act covers too large an area and provides for a payout in the fifth year. This could be changed by the House in 10 minutes if the Government would bring in the Bill as it promised to do in the last Speech from the Throne. The stabilized fund now contains over \$900 million, and the farmers need the money now. Their cash flow has seldom been worse. This hoarding of the farmers' money is aggravating and, worse still, the farmers are not even permitted to opt out and get their own money back.

Progressive Conservative Members of the House have urged the Government for months to provide a payout, but the Liberals have consistently refused. The Government has locked the farmers into the Act, refuses to let them opt out, and refuses to provide a payout. It almost seems as if the Government wants western farmers to go bankrupt.

The frustration and dissatisfaction of our farmers are so great that hundreds would opt out now if they could. I ask the Government to bring in the Western Grain Stabilization Act for amendment forthwith, and provide for a payout now. Yes, now!

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[Translation]

BILINGUALISM

POSITION OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. Pierre Gimaiel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Mines)): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak in the House today because, after spending a week in my riding, I found that one of the major concerns of the people of Lac-Saint-Jean, a riding that is one of the Francophone