

*Old Age Security Act (No. 2)*

inflation which, as you know, would have been an 11.5 per cent raise. How does the Minister plan to get around the position where you are better off with a smaller pension from the Canada Pension Plan than a larger one?

**Miss Bégin:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member started out by saying there are several anomalies with this Bill and he indicated what he believes is one of them. I have explained to him privately, and I have to repeat it again today, that the so-called anomaly he has just pointed out has nothing to do with this Bill. It is deeply rooted in the whole system whereby far too many Canadians do not have a private pension, and the purpose of the Green Paper is to start putting on track a dossier with a view to seeing the situation is corrected as soon as possible. But that has nothing to do with this Bill. This Bill continues to function the way the system of public pensions functions. Therefore, the Hon. Member's thesis does not apply here. He is pointing to a problem which has always existed and which we want to correct through the Green Paper.

**Mr. McKinnon:** The Minister did not address the question of the Canada Pension Plan, where it would appear that a person would be better off if their Canada Pension brought them in a couple of dollars under the line where they would start to get the GIS. They will get \$2 worth of GIS, and because of that \$2 they will be able to get their old age pension indexed at the rate of inflation. That would make quite a considerable difference. A person would be much better off to have the smaller Canada Pension than the larger one.

**Miss Bégin:** I am sorry the Hon. Member does not want to accept the facts on that so-called anomaly, as well as in the other cases he referred to the other day in the House concerning people with a very small private pension. Nothing has changed with this Bill. This Bill does not affect the situation at all; it is continuing today's philosophy of Government public pensions.

The other things which are wrong in the system by which people have small CPP's, or no private pensions, or have small private pensions, are anomalies which we are addressing through the Green Paper on pensions. This Bill has nothing to do with that. I am sorry to repeat this. I am sure the Hon. Member does not want to play politics on the backs of seniors, but this Bill has nothing to do with that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** The Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes).

**Mr. Hawkes:** A speech, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** The Chair has recognized the Hon. Member for Calgary West in debate.

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** There are times, Mr. Speaker, in this House, when we should attempt to use the medium of television and radio to speak to the nation. There are other times when we should try to direct our attention to the Hon. Members of this House, because it is only the Hon. Members of this House who can do something about a tragic wrong which is about to be perpetrated on some Canadians. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is that kind of a day.

At six o'clock this evening, Hon. Members of this House will be forced to stand and vote. The Minister is asking Hon. Members of the Liberal Party to stand in this House and impose a special lifetime tax on every Canadian who is 65 years of age and over. It is a lifetime tax which has an immediate consequence in the year 1983. It is a tax which will grow in size and consequence in every succeeding year. In this time of economic difficulty, with budget deficits running in the order of \$24 billion, she is asking a particular sub-group, one which represents the poorest segment of Canadian society, to bear a tax, a minimum 3 per cent special tax which no one else would pay, which would last a lifetime and which would grow.

● (1130)

In this Chamber, at six o'clock this evening, we can put a stop to that. Before my remarks are concluded, I will move a motion which will delay debate and thus leave the current law in place. Anyone on the Liberal side who has a social conscience and supports that motion will be ensuring that this special tax is not imposed on senior citizens, those who are 65 years of age and over.

Why in the name of justice, in the name of humanity, is Party discipline about to prevail on an issue which is so ill-considered and so unnecessary? The Minister told us this morning that she estimates the savings to the federal treasury this year to be \$18 million. That amounts to 15 cents per month per taxpayer. If every taxpayer in this country was willing to donate 15 cents per month, this piece of legislation would not be necessary.

There have been estimates that this Chamber costs something in the order of half a million dollars a day to operate. We will have taken the time of this Chamber for approximately six days on this piece of legislation. We will have cost the Canadian taxpayers at least \$3 million to debate this Bill which is intended to save the Government \$18 million and make the lives of every senior citizen who lives at or near an income level of \$9,000 a year poorer. The Bill would impose a very special tax on senior citizens who make \$750 a month, who must provide themselves with shelter, transportation, recreation, food and medicine. They earn \$750 a month, and there are many of them, and they are being asked to absorb a special 3 per cent to 5 per cent tax this year which will be in the order of 4 per cent next year and 5 per cent the year after, because it multiplies in that fashion. I ask, where is the sanity in the Cabinet? Where is the social conscience of Members of Parliament who have been sent here by their constituents?

I have absolutely no doubt that if the Government were to ask every single Canadian taxpayer, ten million people who pay taxes, if they were willing to contribute 15 cents a month more in taxes so that the senior citizens of this country would not have to pay a special tax and the Government would not have to take money out of their pockets, 99.9 per cent of the time the answer would be, "Yes, I will pay the extra 15 cents a month".