

Supply

defenders of social policy are in the Opposition, I wish to point out something about their record in social policy and health care. In 1982 it was the Liberals who introduced a \$4 billion cut in transfer payments to the provinces in terms of financing health care.

When it came to pensions it was the same Liberals in power who put a cap on indexation for pensions with a six and five program. I remind the same Liberals who now talk so vigorously about the need for a child care program that I was here in 1970 when we had a royal commission make a report on child care for federal action. Year after year when we asked the Liberals in power to do something about it, we were told: "No, no, it couldn't be done". In 1984 there was a new Leader of the Liberal Party, a man to whom we paid tribute in the House yesterday. I remember well that, in the 1984 election campaign, when he had to choose between child care and the deficit, he explicitly stated that child care could not be proceeded with in 1984 because the Liberals had to deal with the problem of the deficit.

The modern Liberal Party, and the same finance critic talked about taxing back social benefits a few weeks ago. It is the modern Liberal Party that took action against health care and pensioners, and did nothing about child care. When we hear members of that Party crying, we see crocodile tears.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I wish to say something about the importance of the universality principle in social programming. For me this goes to the root of the problems with the Government. I say with care and I think with precision that the Conservative Government now in power wants to turn the clock backward. It wants to move us away from the type of society that we have been developing, particularly since the Second World War. Since the Second World War there has been a growing consensus in Canada among men and women outside political Parties toward the establishment of a new part of the Canadian tradition. It is one that acknowledges that the market economy is immensely important and desirable, but also acknowledges that government leadership and the active participation of government in the organization of our lives in society as a whole is absolutely necessary if we are to achieve a sense of equality and community.

• (1140)

As we can see clearly in Margaret Thatcher's Great Britain at the close of the 20th century, and in Ronald Reagan's America, if the market economy is left to its own devices, for all its productivity, and is not met by an equivalent power provided by government in this society, the market economy will pull people apart rather than bring them together. It will produce less of a sense of community rather than more of a sense of community. Rather than creating more equality, it will diminish equality. It will exacerbate the problems of community rather than reducing them.

The Government is clearly moving us back to an earlier model of a society which is completely dominated by the market-place. I have spoken in general terms because it is important in political life from time to time for all politicians from all Parties to describe in terms of broad values what kind of society we are talking about. I want to bring it now to the concrete description and say why I, as Leader of the New Democratic Party, am concerned about what is being done in terms of social policy in this Budget.

I am deeply disturbed about what is happening as a result of our turning our pension plan into a means-test program. That is what is being done.

Our social policy is one in which we have evolved toward the principle that a citizen has certain rights as a citizen which include social rights and not simply individual rights.

In other words, most of the rights we guaranteed in the Charter of Rights in the early part of this decade and those rights that have been established in democratic societies throughout the world, are essentially negative, with positive implications. That is to say, they restrict people from interfering with each other, and restrict states from interfering with individuals so they may act freely as individuals in exercising their choice in a democratic society.

However, social democratic societies in western Europe and many parts of Canada have quite consciously evolved the notion that a citizen is entitled to certain social rights in addition to individual rights, and these positive rights which the people of Canada have bestowed upon themselves through the democratic system include things like pensions and medicare, which we have taken out of the market-place. Unlike the United States, we have said that a Canadian citizen is not only entitled to freedom of expression, to the appropriate processes in our courts, and free elections, we are also