

are going to sink into the lower income brackets. It is happening with the GST and this bill is absolutely consistent with that.

We have to ask ourselves as politicians why there is that sinking element of public trust in what we are doing here when you see this kind of hypocrisy that we are faced with on the first day of this sitting of the House of Commons in this new decade. It makes me quite angry.

When I came here as a Member of Parliament I had very high ideals about the kind of work we were here for. I still have those ideals, but I have a growing sense of cynicism about the intent of many others in this House.

I want to close off my comments on the subject of how this bill relates to women. At its annual general meeting in May, 1988, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women endorsed a resolution to support, upon divorce or separation, the mandatory and automatic equalization of all pension credits and RRSPs between spouses for their years of cohabitation. I am going to refer to my colleagues at this end of this side of the House consistently. I think we have to do that because the liberals in their chameleon-like pose are trying to move over, if not literally, at least philosophically when it is convenient for them to do so.

The continuing feminization of poverty is something that has to be addressed. This bill does nothing. How many women do any of us know who make \$86,000 a year? I challenge members to name or even to think in your consciousness how many women you know who make \$86,000 a year. It would be an interesting statistic for someone to look and see how many women do earn that. In contrast, I can think of many women who earn \$15,500, which is the amount which would be sheltered if this bill is passed. I think members could think of many who earn that much or less.

It is good for the public to know, whenever a bill comes before the House, just who benefits and who loses. It is very clear from this bill who is going to benefit. It is also very clear who is going to lose. Those people who are already over-taxed are going to have to pay in order that those in the very high income brackets can shelter their money. It is almost disgusting what this government is about with this bill. But it has a beautiful unity with everything else it has achieved since it was elected. It does have a consistency and it is something that I know

Government Orders

that we at this end of this side of the House will be opposing with all our might in the months to come in this decade.

In conclusion, I hope that the Liberals in their chameleon-like stance will oppose this bill.

As an aside, I also want to talk about listening to the experts to whom the Liberal member from Essex—Kent referred. The experts are not those people who are going to be appearing before the committee. The experts are those people who are trying to live on \$15,000 a year, the amount that would be sheltered if this bill comes into force.

I encourage that committee to bring in those people to talk to committee members so that they can really understand what real reform of the tax system is about.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask my hon. friend a question. I agree with the designation of the Liberal party as a chameleon-like entity, but the hon. member's argument was somewhat ostrich-like in the sense that she was putting her head in the sand on three absolutely essential elements of any pension regime for any country.

Let me just ask her this so I can make sure that I understand her policy. Is she saying that under no circumstance should we have tax assistance for pensions in this country? That is my first question. If she is saying that, is she then denying the inflationary effects that this would cause, because as you know tax assisted pension planning is deflationary in a major sense and if you tried to do it without some tax assistance you have a major inflationary push in the country?

Third, if I understand her correctly, is she saying that all pensions should be provided through the public purse for Canadians under a certain level of income? Is that her position?

Ms. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to see that a member of the government is in the House and is willing to ask questions. I think that the questions which have been posed to me are somewhat mischievous in nature. I think he knows very well what I was intending to say.

Of course we believe in tax assisted pensions. But as I pointed out at the very beginning of my address, the real intent of the tax system and the pension system is to assist people in their old age. The tax system is a means of redistributing wealth.