

fundamental changes to the social security system of the country.

Surely a debate of this importance should not have been brought to this abrupt conclusion by the imposition of time allocation by this Conservative government. The fact that this has been done by this government shows a fundamental lack of confidence by it in the validity of its ideas which underlie the proposal in this bill to claw back the old age pension and the family allowance from increasing numbers of Canadians.

In a few minutes the House will be compelled to vote on third reading of the legislation. I call upon the Conservative members to give serious thought to the implications of voting for this measure, to search their hearts and consciences and to decide, at least this once, not to vote with their party.

If Conservative members do not want to listen to me, perhaps they will at least listen to their own Prime Minister who said on November 8, 1988 in Sydney, Nova Scotia:

As long as I am Prime Minister, social programs, especially those for the elderly will be improved, not diminished.

If Conservative members do not want to listen to me, I hope they will listen to the words of their own government in its consultative document. In it, in the case of seniors, according to the National Council on Welfare the federal government publicly rejected the idea of a clawback or surtax on old age pensions as late as January 1985 on the grounds that it would, and I quote:

—seriously disrupt the retirement income system—the clawback changes the rules of the game without their consent. The elderly have already paid for their old age pensions through a lifetime of paying income taxes.

Earlier today I tabled the first of a large number of petitions from The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation. This group represents some 500,000 retired Canadians. These petitions state:

WHEREAS the federal government in its April budget, has proposed to tax back Old Age Security and Family Allowance benefits in part or in their entirety, depending on the recipient's income, and

WHEREAS this tax, in the opinion of your petitioners, would undermine the principle of universality of Canada's social programs

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and will, as a result, create a potential threat to the income of future pensioners,

WHEREFORE the undersigned, your petitioners, humbly pray and call upon Parliament to abandon this proposed measure,

Again I say to Conservative members: if you are not going to listen to me or members of my party or members of the party of the spokesman for the NDP who has just had the floor, at least listen to the voice of 500,000 retired Canadians from one end of the country to the other. Their president, Les Batterson of Windsor, in a letter to the Prime Minister on June 23 wrote:

—our position is that the tax back is age biased, grossly inequitable and has serious implications with regard to universality.

We view this proposal as a serious breach of faith by our government and an insidious effort to undercut the Social Security Programs that you have on numerous times stated are a sacred trust.

The number of people represented by The National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation demonstrates that opposition to this measure is not simply opposition on behalf of a relatively small number of well-off Canadians. The number is going to grow to millions because of the lack of indexing of the \$50,000 threshold.

I regret that the choking off of debate by the Conservative government means that I must end now by once again by making a fervent plea to the hearts and consciences of the Conservative members to ask them to vote against this measure to protect the interests of senior citizens and of people with families.

Please, I ask the Conservatives, have some feeling for the families and the seniors of this country. If you do not, they will not forget you in the next election and you will not be back again.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 5.45 p.m., pursuant to Order made Monday, December 18, 1989, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.