

Supply

plants in East Montreal, three refineries? We didn't hear him then.

Mr. Della Noce: Ten in Canada.

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): Ten in Canada. Did he rise then, Mr. Speaker? Does he remember the kind of legacy they left us in 1984? About \$200 billion. They left us a legacy to manage the deficit, to manage negative growth. That is what we were left by the Liberal Government. Did the Hon. Member rise then? When we introduced Bill C-26 in 1986, which provided benefits for widows and widowers, did he rise in the House to ask the Conservative Government why we didn't extend those benefits to everyone? I think he should remember that during the last 21 years his Government was in power, they never passed this kind of legislation for anyone. Did the Hon. Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie rise then? Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear what the Hon. Member has to say and I had to wait until today, when the Hon. Member decided to wake up. However, there was a time when he should have spoken, and he did not.

• (1320)

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member doesn't seem to have learned a thing, although this is his second term. I didn't ask him to rise in the House, I asked him to rise in caucus. I can inform the Hon. Member that in caucus, my Party proposed cuts in family allowances. However, we won in caucus. They were not cut. My Party's legacy was universal health insurance for everyone and universal pensions for everyone. The social programs we have today were introduced by the Liberal Party, not by the Tories.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Malépart: It was Trudeau and Pearson. Members did not have to fight their causes here, they did so in Caucus where we were able to win our battles. We didn't need the Opposition to fight our battles. It is pretty obvious the Hon. Member has learned nothing in his second term. He was lucky to be elected on the basis of a pack of lies, like all the others.

He referred just now to Bill C-26 which continues to discriminate against all elderly Canadians between the ages of 60 and 64 who are single or separated and who live in his riding. He did not defend them. And he could

at least have asked his Minister to give to the poor the money he is taking away from the rich. These people are poor, and he could not defend them!

M. DeBlois: Mr. Speaker, I always listen with interest to the Hon. Member from Laurier—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) because he is a good speaker and sometimes even eloquent. But I would like to remind him of the very interesting opinion expressed by the National Council on Welfare in its comments on the Budget. The problem is that we are saddled with a huge debt which must be spread as equitably as possible by any responsible government. In the Budget, the Government is asking people who can afford it most to make an effort. And I must admit that I am surprised and a bit disappointed to hear the Hon. Member from Laurier—Sainte-Marie, for whom I have a lot of respect, stand up for the rich.

We are trying to make a transfer, and here is what the National Council on Welfare had to say: "The advantage of the claw-back is that it saves money not by tampering with the principle of universality, but rather by increasing the progressivity of social programs. Most defenders of universality believe that benefits should be distributed in a progressive fashion: as the income rises, the benefits diminish, and vice versa. The claw-back does no damage to universality. Old age pension and family allowance cheques would still go out to all the pensioners and parents, regardless of their incomes, but it does reduce the net value of benefit to upper-income recipients". That is what we have done. We are merely asking people whose net income—we are talking about net income not gross income—is over \$50,000 a year to make a little extra effort to reduce the debt which, if nothing is done now, will reach in a few years such proportions that the social programs we enjoy now will have to be discontinued. I wonder what the Hon. Member from Laurier—Sainte-Marie has to say about that.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I have never denied the existence of a debt or deficit problem. Yet, I suggest this Tory Government is wrong to ask sick people to share this burden. When a man gets sick, he has no time to ponder whether he can afford to be sick. He urgently seeks treatment. The Government should never use sick people as hostages.