

Supply

it means; that is what they have done. The people of Canada have been misled.

On March 7, 1984, the Prime Minister said: "Our position is simple and straightforward. We are in favour of universality in social programs, and it shall not be touched". Then, not long ago, on October 15, 1988, in Summerside, P.E.I., the Prime Minister told a group of seniors: "Let me say a special word to the senior citizens. In the future Canada will be doing more, not less, for all of you. As long as I am Prime Minister of Canada social benefits, and especially those for the elderly, will be improved, not diminished by our Government which is committed to social justice and fairness for Canadians".

The Prime Minister was not telling the truth. There is no other way to say it. I hate to use that term to describe the Prime Minister of our country. However, he told senior citizens that he would never introduce a program where they would not get their old age security cheques, and he has done just that. Some 128,000 pensioners in Canada will lose part or all of their old age security cheques as a result of this Budget, what they call the claw-back provision. They will have their pensions or part of their pensions clawed back, as the Minister of Finance has described it. As far as family allowances are concerned, 575,000 families will have all or part of their family allowances clawed back. That is the reality.

For the moment that is what this Budget does, but we know that there will be another Budget next year and the following year; there will be a Budget every year into the future. While 128,000 pensioners will be hit as a result of the 1989 Budget, ten years from now, if nothing else changes, the number will increase to 300,000 and in twenty years over a million pensioners will have all or part of their pension cheques clawed back by the federal Government. Those are the figures of Statistics Canada.

There is another sinister element. Today the Government has said that if they make in excess of \$50,000 it is clawing back their old age security cheques. What will be in next year's Budget? Will it lower that amount to \$40,000, to \$30,000 and then to \$25,000? Why not? Why should we trust this Government to do anything but that? It promised our seniors that it would never do what it has just done.

We do not have enough paper in this place to list all the broken promises we have seen from this Government in the last four years. Why would any pensioner find any comfort in a Government saying that it is \$50,000 now and that is it? It has not said that, by the

way; it has given no assurance that that is to be the cut-off. Today it is \$50,000. Next year it could be \$40,000 and \$25,000 just as easily. Once this idea of universality is broken it is easy to erode it further. I am sure that \$50,000 sounds like a lot of money to people today, but with the inflation rate going up every year teachers who are not making \$50,000 today will be making more than that with cost of living increases and they will not get their Old Age Security cheques. Nurses will not get Old Age Security cheques. Tradesmen will not get Old Age Security cheques. People working on trains, planes and ships will not get Old Age Security cheques. That is precisely what this Government is saying today.

The Government wants to shatter the whole concept of universality where everyone is treated fairly, equitably and justly. Now there will be a means test. If a person makes a certain income he or she will not get what other Canadian citizens will receive.

This is called harmonizing with the United States. It is that part of the Free Trade Agreement aimed at harmonizing the social programs of Canada, not with a progressive country in western Europe but with the United States of America. The U.S. does not have universality in its pension system, nor universality in terms of its health care or hospital care. Yet, the Government has begun the process of making programs like those in Alabama, Tennessee and Florida. Once Canadians realize what is happening to them, I do not think they will accept it for one minute.

There is something extremely cruel going on here, extremely underhanded and extremely sinister. Once the Government says that it is to abandon the universality attached to pensions—and that has been done—and that it is to abandon the policy of universality attached to family allowances, what is next? We can only speculate what is coming next.

Will medicare be next? Will the Government say to you, Mr. Speaker, "you make \$50,000 a year; when you go to the hospital or to a clinic you had better take your credit card or cash because unless you are prepared to pay for your health care, you are not going to get any". That is what is next; the writing is on the wall.

What about education, Mr. Speaker? When you send your children to Grade 5 and you are making \$50,000 a year, why don't you pay extra for their education? You can afford that. What about police protection? What about ambulance service? You can pay for that. Where does it end, Mr. Speaker? Once you break this sacred trust, once you break this commitment to universality,