

Government Orders

can save money and not contribute to the tax system. It is the lower and the middle-income people who pay the burden of the taxes in this country. There is no justice in that.

We in the New Democratic Party are firm in our principles that we are opposed to that kind of tax reform.

Mr. Milliken: They don't buy RRSPs in that party.

Ms. Hunter: I can hear that the Liberals are getting a little antsy because we really do have the alternatives. All they have is the rhetoric. As my colleague for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt has just pointed out, it was the same with the GST.

I want to talk about our alternatives because we have some. It is that pension coverage provided by RRSPs is offered by the universal, fully indexed and fully portable Canada and Quebec pension plans. The money being spent on the changes in Bill C-52 would be much better directed toward a significant expansion of the public pension system, thereby ensuring that those low and middle income people do have security in their old age.

That is what this is supposed to be about. That is what those of us on this side of the House—at least at this end of the House—believe the tax system should do. The tax system is a means of redistributing wealth so that those people who have the most can contribute the most to the welfare of us all.

Bill C-52 certainly does not do that. It protects those people. It shelters their money so that they do not have to pay their fair share of the tax burden.

I think we also have to understand the kind of paranoic concern that has been generated by the government on deficit reduction. The minister responsible for privatization stood in the House today and gave his reasons why this is such a good idea and why we should all go along with this. We should consider that \$350 million is not going into the tax system because of this measure.

Why is this government using the bureaucracy of government to protect those income earners in the \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000 or \$90,000 a year bracket? Why are we using the mechanism of government to protect people who can look after themselves very well? If they believe in the free market system, then let them look after themselves. Let the tax system provide benefits for those who have more difficulty in looking after themselves.

It is somewhat curious that when we are talking about deficit reduction and how we have to be really hard nosed about government spending, that they are using tax dollars to shelter the wealth of those high income earners. I say tax dollars because it is the government bureaucracy that must do this.

We need a fully public pension system that does protect people. Bill C-52 does absolutely nothing to eliminate poverty among our seniors. What we are really about is providing good government. It should be good government, minimal government, so that it is not protecting those people who can protect themselves very well. It is protecting minimal government so that we are talking about not encouraging people to get involved in government. I am talking like a Conservative. I am just pointing out the hypocrisy of this bill.

I would be very interested in hearing the responses of government members' to my criticisms. I am hoping that they will be up on their feet and asking me questions afterwards. They seem to want to do it now rather than later.

• (1830)

I want to point out what has been pointed out by other members. This Bill does increase the polarization between the rich and the poor. This is going back to the political context in which I started my address this evening. It fits in. This is what the government is doing. It is increasing that polarization so that that shrinking middle class is going to be under attack more and more. The middle class are either going to have to find some means of getting into the higher income bracket so they can be protected by this government or, more likely, they