

Old Age Security Act (No. 2)

will be affected because their pensions will be lower in the future. Over one million pensioners will be directly affected and unless compensation is provided for the Guaranteed Income Supplement to a greater extent, all old age pensioners will be affected by this Bill.

Before I proceed to my main area of concern, I would like to return to the remarks made by the Hon. Member for York North (Mr. Gamble). He talked about the so-called financial responsibility of the New Democratic Party since it has not been in power federally. I suggest that in the Province of Saskatchewan, where there has been either a CCF or NDP Government for approximately 38 years, when the NDP was in power during the last 11 years it did not have a substantial deficit. It had probably the most responsible fiscal policy of all Governments in Canada.

This year there is a Conservative Government in Saskatchewan which has added a \$220 million deficit to the people of Saskatchewan. That is more than the total accumulated deficit of Saskatchewan Governments for the last 77 years. The Progressive Conservative Government accomplished this in one year. That is an example of the fiscal responsibility that the Hon. Member for York North was talking about.

It is interesting to note that the most negative reaction to all three of these Bills has come from the National Council of Welfare, which is a direct adviser to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin). The Minister said on June 29:

The budget fully protects the lowest income Canadians and the working poor.

The Council issued a statement repudiating those remarks. It said:

We disagree. The June budget social policy aspects will adversely affect thousands of low income Canadians.

We have seen how well the Minister accepts the advice of that group which advises her.

Another critique on the effects of the budget was issued by the Canadian Council on Social Development. This is another group that is well qualified to make statements on the effects of this kind of legislation which will have on Canadians, particularly low-income Canadians. That group stated on July 26:

The budget contains many negative measures that will cause hardship and suffering to many Canadians who do not have the resources to protect themselves.

This comment and the previous comment about the budget were made by organizations who feel themselves responsible to outline the effects of this legislation.

In the face of this massive repudiation, one would think that the Minister of National Health and Welfare would heed those remarks. These were remarks from two of the foremost national welfare agencies in Canada which were speaking against the budget from which these Bills arise. How can the Minister in all conscience face the House of Commons when she knows that the people who advise her and have the best insight into the effects of this legislation are telling her that it is wrong? Her programs have been torn to shreds. Her important constituency advisers have repudiated her, including the

one appointed by the Government. Her defence to her own program has been thoroughly discredited. She has nothing left to lose in terms of credibility.

The only universality being practised by Members in the Government benches is their urge to cling to power. That urge to stay in power is the universal feeling the Government Party continuously clings to.

We can examine the results of this Government's attempt to stay in power. We should consider the arguments made by those two agencies, the National Council of Welfare and the Canadian Council on Social Development. If we look at their remarks on these Bills, we can see that they point out that a single pensioner can lose the Guaranteed Income Supplement if they have an income of \$6,123. Once a pensioner earns that amount, the Guaranteed Income Supplement is lost. These Councils also point out that a pensioner who earns \$9,200 yearly will lose the maximum of \$388 by the end of the restraint period. These people will be living on incomes which are below the poverty line. Nothing that the Government says or does will help them climb above that poverty line. Even those who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement are living below the poverty line at this time by \$500.

Regardless of what is said about the effects of this Bill, it will ultimately take food, heat, clothing and other amenities away from these pensioners. They will be making the same kind of sacrifice as people earning larger incomes.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please! The Hon. President of the Privy Council on a point of order.

Mr. Pinard: I thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. I simply want to offer our sincere best wishes to all of the staff of the House of Commons, the Table, and to you, Mr. Speaker, your assistants, your superiors and our colleagues on both sides of the House. I hope that these holidays will be productive and that everyone will come back in to shape to end the session on January 17. On behalf of the Government, I therefore wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the wishes extended by the President of the Privy Council. I want to thank all the staff of the House of Commons who have worked for us and our country. Finally, to all my colleagues on both sides of the House, I wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

[English]

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My colleagues are asking me to state my remarks in French, but I have decided to wait until next year to do that!

I also want to join with the Government House Leader and the spokesman for the Conservative Party in wishing to all who serve us and to those who are interested in what we do, and whom we serve, the very merriest of Christmases. I hope that