

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

Mr. Skelly: And on six and five, 13 times, the Liberals and Tories voted together, so we know where this Conservative Party is coming from. They are very upset this evening because it has been opened up to the light of day where these people in the Conservative Party are.

We know what kind of Government we have across the floor. We know ultimately what is going to happen to them by February 18, 1985, but it is time to talk about the electoral choices that people will have to make. One of the most serious mistakes that could be made in this country is on the six and five legislation, and the Bill before us tonight. The electorate has to make some judgment on what the Official Opposition has put on the record in relation to this Bill? According to the Tories it is everybody's fault. It is the Liberals' fault, but we have not had one constructive alternative from the Official Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

The remarks made by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton are interesting. I must admit that within that particular caucus he is one of the real gentlemen, and I would suggest that he is probably constrained by the more exuberant right wing Members of that caucus who wish to drive the hammer down on the middle and lower income wage earners in this country. It is interesting, if we pursue the same theme, that they have refused to put forward a policy in this House of Commons, an alternative policy, on any of the legislation before us, except to support six and five. The Tory position since February, 1980, in this House has been summed up by the former Conservative finance Minister when he said, coming out of the Budget speech, "Well, the Liberals are a Government arift, and the Government has no answers". When asked what he would do, he said "If we told you what we would do, the people would never elect us". Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, that is the situation here.

If the Conservative Party told the people of Canada what they were prepared to do, they would never be elected and, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, they do not want to move another embassy to Jerusalem; they do not want to offer to destroy another Petro-Canada; they do not want to offer to get rid of 60,000 civil servants over a three year period, and that is exactly where they are today. The Tory Party is a bad alternative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Member for Moose Jaw rises on a point of order.

Mr. Neil: Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the relevancy of this is. The comments being made by the Hon. Member have nothing whatsoever to do with the debate.

Miss Jewett: It is beginning to hurt. They do not like the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member's point is well taken. Would the Member for Comox-Powell River please take note.

Mr. Skelly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The behaviour of the Official Opposition must be judged in the context of their full behaviour in the thirty-second Parliament, since 1980, to show that their performance tonight on this particular Bill is consistent over time. The electorate, if they place their trust in the Conservative Party to relieve them from the hardship and the dismal record of the Government opposite, then unfortunately they will be looking at five hard years ahead.

That brings us forward into the question of where we should be on this particular issue. It is interesting that clearly the Liberal Party, since the inception of this particular Parliament, has refused to address the needs of pensioners. The miserable amount of money that was put forward to boost the base rate of those pensioners in 1980 was extremely inadequate. The other interesting situation is that the Conservative Party has never put forward an alternative for pensioners.

Mr. Epp: And you do not have one.

Mr. Skelly: There is no doubt that our Party has placed firmly on the record a policy on pensions. It is a right, not a privilege, for every citizen in Canada to have a fair pension; every senior citizen who retires has a right to an income above the poverty line. They have a right to expect fair retirement income. It is basically a question of, as the gentleman opposite said, fair play in our society.

I notice, Mr. Speaker, that my time has not expired and yet it is ten o'clock, so with your permission I will take my remaining time when the debate resumes, and call it ten o'clock.

• (2200)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

TRADE—UNITED STATES SUBSIDIZATION OF WHEAT PRODUCTS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, on December 2 I put the following question to the Acting Prime Minister:

Last month the United States announced a Blended Credit Program, which is a new export program for subsidizing the exportation of wheat from that country. It is worth about \$1.5 billion over the next three years, and is in contradiction to the position which the U.S. took at GATT. Has the Government or the Prime Minister petitioned the United States asking them to withdraw that very destructive program? If they have, and the answer is no., can he assure us there will be a similar program for Canadian farmers so we do not lose our world markets?

I asked that question because I believe the American program that was announced a few days ago could be potentially very destructive for the export of Canadian grain around the world. The reason is that the program is worth \$1.5 billion, to be spent over three years. They have announced that during