

income is the first step to making it possible for them to maintain even the standard of living that they have.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I admit that a guaranteed income is not the whole answer. People say that some of us in the New Democratic Party regard it as a panacea to cope with all the troubles of people on low income. We do not. Until we get what President Nixon says he is after, until we get people off relief and welfare rolls and on to payrolls, we will not really progress too far. But with a guaranteed income we will have made it possible for people to exist. When every welfare and social work agency in the country worth its salt is telling the government in no uncertain terms that a guaranteed income is a must, when even the Deputy Minister of the Department of National Health and Welfare in testimony before the Senate Committee on Poverty says that a guaranteed income is a must, surely the government ought to know whether a guaranteed income is a realistic step. I say members of the government do know, but they are not prepared to trim their priorities in other directions to make it possible.

We say that a guaranteed income is a must, and along with it there ought to be a guarantee that a person is able to keep it. When small increases are made to pensions, the first thing that happens—just as outlined in the letter from which I read—is that the landlord takes the raise in pension as fast as the poor people get it. Therefore, in addition to a guaranteed income there must be a guarantee that a person is able to keep it; there must be legislation which will prevent the landlord, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker and the government itself from taking it away. The present government has a very bad habit: when it gives a small raise in pensions—which it has done once or twice—it is in effect robbing Peter to pay Peter. It may give a little bit in pensions, but it will take that little bit away from the veterans allowance. That is not the way to do things. The government knows better than that.

Sometimes people think that the government could not be so hardhearted and that it makes these mistakes unintentionally. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, they are not mistakes. These things are done on purpose. They are done because the government does not care one fig for the low-income people. It regards them as surplus, as fit for the scrap pile and that is about all.

The Budget—Mrs. MacInnis

Another measure we want to see enacted would provide for guaranteed jobs and training for jobs. Yesterday I introduced an amending bill which, if adopted, would make it possible for married women, or single women if they are providing domestic service at home, to qualify for manpower retraining and the allowances that go with it. I see the minister shaking his head—I hope in agreement with the principle of the bill.

Mr. Benjamin: He talks a good fight.

Mrs. MacInnis: I know he talks a good fight, but I would like to see him come through with action. That is always the way with the government. They talk all the way; they don't act. It is always jam tomorrow but never jam today. I say it is time we got the jam today for the people who need it. Sure, there is jam for Members of Parliament, for Senators and people in highly-placed jobs, for highly-placed civil servants and the coteries surrounding the various ministers, and over \$100,000 for the Prime Minister's own staff. There is money for that kind of thing, but there is no money for the people who need it. Any civilization which begins at the top, giving rises in income to people who have a fair degree of income and security, has no right to call itself a civilization.

Mr. Benjamin: Off with their heads!

Mrs. MacInnis: Yes, off with their heads! We have not even emerged from the jungle and we have no right to call ourselves a civilization.

Mr. McCleave: Nobody is doing that.

Mrs. MacInnis: Some people call it a civilization, but it seems to me that is an exaggeration; I think that is the best word to describe it. As a fifth step we want to see the implementation of a fair tax system, a system of taxation based strictly on ability to pay. I know that with respect to the white paper on reform of taxation we will probably end up with the Minister of Finance backing down a great deal under pressure. I will make a bet right now that he will back down in those areas of the white paper which concern people who already have big dividends and big incomes, because they are people able to mount big and powerful lobbies. We should go back to the principle that people should be taxed according to their ability to pay, no matter from where they get their income.