

those in society who need it most". That is what the Hon. Member for Brampton-Georgetown stated in his speech.

**Mr. McDermid:** That is a little out of context, Sheila.

**Ms. Copps:** We heard from the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall). Instead of discussing the issue of universality, she talked about the deficit. She talked about her responsibility with respect to the fiscal side of the ledger. She did not talk to the Canadian people—

**Mr. McDermid:** Start telling the truth!

**Ms. Copps:** —to Canadian senior citizens and young men and women who want to know whether universality will exist under this Government. When one of the other Government members talks about universality he says the deficit is the tail wagging the dog. Well, Mr. Speaker, in my mind and in the mind of my Party the deficit is the tail that is wagging the Government. In fact, the Government has no intention of living up to what the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) called a sacred trust. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister said that universality is a sacred trust and it will not be tampered with. The Prime Minister and his policies have been denuded before the Canadian people. We see now that the emperor has no clothes.

● (1540)

In the working document introduced by the Prime Minister's Government he says that we must ask ourselves whether the federal transfer payments of Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement and tax expenditures should continue in their present form or whether they need to be redesigned to increase fairness and reduce the burden on the federal Government. Mr. Speaker, these are not the words of the Opposition. This is not the working document of a previous Liberal administration. This is the document introduced by his Government and his Finance Minister in an attempt to begin the erosion of the universal social programs which we as Liberals have spent and will continue to spend our political lives fighting for.

When the Prime Minister is speaking in the House or out on the hustings in Baie Comeau he may not say the same things as he does when he is talking to *The Financial Post*. However, when he was talking to *The Financial Post* on March 24, 1984, he said, "I have no hesitation in reviewing the concept of universality".

Today in the House Members on all sides had an opportunity to put their positions clearly. The Government Members had an opportunity to clarify for the Canadian people what kind of cut-backs we can expect. Instead, we heard obfuscation and more deceit and dishonesty on the part of this administration.

**Some Hon. Members:** Shame, shame!

**Ms. Copps:** In Question Period we heard the Prime Minister talk about the benefits received by bank presidents and people earning millions of dollars. I want to remind you, Mr. Speaker,

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and the Canadian taxpayers that the figure which is being bounced about by the Government as a potential cut-off point for universal benefits is not that of the income of bank presidents. The figure that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) gave in a newspaper interview last week as a potential cut-off point was \$26,000. I want the Minister and the Government to know that a \$26,000 family income in Canada right now is below the national mean. It is a less-than-average income for families. If he thinks that we on this side of the House are going to stand back and watch his Government trample and destroy the social programs that we have spent a lifetime building, he will have to take another look, stand back, and think again. We are prepared to fight the figure of \$26,000. We are prepared to fight the figure of \$34,000. We are prepared to fight a Government that has received a massive majority from the Canadian people only to implement a hidden, secret agenda which it was not prepared to reveal to the people of Canada before September 4.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that the issue of trust, which has never been properly dissipated in the minds of Canadian people, is an issue which many senior citizens will ask themselves about this Christmas. Many of those senior citizens voted for the current Government and the Prime Minister because he said that universality is a sacred trust which they would not tamper with. We have seen the trust of the Government. We have seen the words of the Prime Minister who contradicted his Finance Minister. We have seen the words of the Minister of National Health and Welfare who subsequently contradicted the Minister of Finance as well as the Prime Minister. The Minister of State for Finance does not even dare discuss the issue of universality because she knows that if the true feelings of the Conservative Party on this issue were to emerge, they would spell the death knoll for her Party in any future election.

My Leader made reference to that burden which is being carried around by the Conservative caucus in a Party which has never believed in universality or baby bonuses. It has not even believed in shelters for battered wives. The majority of Progressive Conservatives, at their last convention, voted against increases in funding for shelters for battered wives. I believe that is the legacy that the Government must live with. I believe it is a legacy which government Members would like to throw off. However, because the Government and the Prime Minister were elected at the beck of Bay Street, it is now clear that their hidden agenda will come out.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that their hidden agenda started today with 100 board and other appointments for Progressive Conservatives. This from a Prime Minister who promised all Canadians he would never do anything like that.

[*English*]

Again, Mr. Speaker, we have another indication of a broken trust, a broken promise, an emperor who has no clothes, and a Government which has been denuded of all moral and social responsibility. Mr. Speaker, we will fight them to the limit.