

able to go to school, and the cost of that school will come out of general revenue.

There are other very important rights. There is the right of families with children to receive family allowance support. The Government of Canada wants to invest in this most important resource and is prepared to pay a certain amount to the family during the important formative years of children to offset some of the costs that a mother or father or both will have raising children. That is a right that Canadian citizens have. We are proud of that right.

We also have access to police protection and to other forms of security in our communities including community services and a variety of social services. Again it does not matter whether we are rich or poor, where we live or what our backgrounds are, we have equal access to those services and that protection. The police never ask, whether you have paid your taxes. They never ask, what your religious affiliation is. That is a service Canadian citizens get automatically.

The same is true of medical care and hospital care. Canadian citizens are able to walk into hospitals if in need and be cared for, regardless of who they are and their level of income.

Fundamental to our rights is the right to obtain an old age pension cheque. A citizen who is 65 years of age and has worked to build what we are proud of in Canada is entitled to an old age security cheque. We have had that right for decades, and we had to struggle originally to get that concept introduced. People across Canada said that this ought to be a fundamental right that goes with citizenship in Canada. It is. That is why Canadians are proud of our achievements and proud of what it means to be a Canadian. It is an important symbol.

Regardless of who one is, whether one is from a rich class, from a disadvantaged group, or from a certain community, just being a Canadian citizen makes one eligible for these basic fundamental rights. It is a real framework of security and protection, and this framework creates a decent standard of living for all Canadians. It gives Canadians peace of mind to know, for example, that if they work in their country, help build our country of Canada, when they reach age 65, they will receive pension cheques from the people of Canada, not from the Government but from the country they helped build. That gives older people real peace of mind, a real

Supply

sense of security. It gives them real hope for the future. That is what it means to be a Canadian today.

All other countries do not have these rights. As a matter of fact, in most other countries in the world, those rights of citizenship are not in existence. Those rights are not found in the United States. Yes, Americans share some of our rights like freedom of speech, freedom of movement, and political and religious freedom. Those are other fundamental rights that we have in our country and we share them with the United States.

• (1230)

Do they have universal hospital care in the United States? There are many cases where people are rushed to hospital and the doctor meets them at the door and asks for their credit card and, if they do not have a credit card, they will not get medical care. We fought against that mindset. We avoided that market-place health care model.

We know people who have become sick in the United States and have literally bankrupted their families by paying for the required health care because they did not have universal medical insurance in that country.

What about old age pensions? Do people in the United States have an old age pension system like the one we have in Canada? The answer is no. They have a contributory pension plan to which they contribute as they work, a pension like the Canada Pension Plan. They will receive pensions, or they will have a means test such as our means test for the Guaranteed Income Supplement. However, when they reach age 65 they do not automatically get an old age pension cheque in the United States.

This is what it meant to be a Canadian—it was one of the few countries in the world where the pension comes with citizenship, but no more. The Conservative Government of the day has broken that right of citizenship.

My dad is 85 years old. He has told me about the old days when the elderly had to take a means test. They had to prove that they were poor enough to qualify for a cheque. He said that we do not want to see that kind of day return to Canada.

My dad is not happy these days because that is exactly what this Government has introduced—a type of means test which says that certain senior citizens will not get their old age pension cheques in the future. That is what