

Senior Citizens' Day

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order. First of all, the House will realize this is not a point of order, and I am going to ask the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) to proceed.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I assume I have ten minutes.

Mr. Speaker, to answer the question, we agreed not to ask for a recorded vote, but personally, I do not agree with the kind of hypocrisy we are seeing here today. Conservative Members will have to realize that being here is a serious matter. We represent people. We represent human beings. And today, just before the holidays, they want to set it up so that the Prime Minister can say to senior citizens, in his Christmas and New Year's message: This is what I am doing for you. In June, we are going to have a Senior Citizens' Day, while three months ago, we saw the other side, when he wanted to cut back the benefits to which these people were entitled. Now I ask you! Let's be serious, let's be honest. We represent human beings.

I agree with the previous speakers that our senior citizens are the people who built this country. But one wonders why the Hon. Member who moved the motion and why the Parliamentary Secretary forgot about this when the Government decided to deindex Old Age Security pensions? Is there anyone on the Conservative side who has an answer to that? Is there anyone on the Government side who is willing to answer? It is absolutely shocking! This is hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker, and that is something I cannot tolerate. And I am sure that the vast majority of my colleagues are of the same opinion. The Prime Minister and his Government will have to make a New Year's resolution for 1986 to change that. They will have to say and do things differently. We saw this on television. Everybody from Quebec saw the broadcast *Le Point* yesterday. All that talk about being generous, but people never get a nickel out of it, Mr. Speaker, only cut-backs for the citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether my Conservative colleagues are indeed realistic, honest, and aware of what is going on. Not so long ago after the Budget, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) was telling Opposition Members that he had met with senior citizens and that those people were prepared to accept smaller old age security benefits. They had to demonstrate. People of 75 and 80, women came from every region of Canada, those people had to spend a lot of time to circulate petitions in an attempt to make the Prime Minister and the Government realize the consequences of what they were doing. And today a fine speechmaker on the Government side rises and would have us believe . . . We want a day like that, Mr. Speaker. I would agree to have a day like that, a memorable day when Mrs. Denis told him what the people thought of Charles Brown, Mr. Speaker. I will agree to designate that day on the condition that Mrs. Denis be appointed honorary president. I want to be sure. If she is appointed, Mr. Speaker, I

will be sure, but if it is somebody appointed by the Progressive Conservatives, never, never. I am very much afraid that such a day would be used to make people swallow something else, like another Budget cut-back.

● (1800)

We all remember those promises. You must remember, Mr. Speaker, you were there. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) was in Sherbrooke when he said: We will restore full indexation. You remember how generous he can be, all ears when he listens, clean-cut, ever so generous with everybody. Words, and more words. He is not stingy with words.

Remember when he tabled the blue paper of the Minister—the Minister of social injustice, that is how we call him now. It said: We will not tamper with old age security pensions. You can sleep in peace. The Prime Minister is indeed a generous man. I solemnly declare that I will protect the elderly.

So what happened in the Budget, Mr. Speaker? What happened after he guaranteed social programs, saying that universality was a sacred trust, Mr. Speaker? Those were the words of the Prime Minister of Canada. What about the Budget cut-backs? He was the great champion of universality. When elderly people took him to task on Parliament Hill, Mr. Speaker, when those people came here they forced the Progressive Conservatives to eat their words, they forced the Prime Minister of Canada to eat his words, and he had to admit he was wrong. And then, like a sore loser, the Prime Minister tried to blame all Canadians, saying they were not mature because they did not want to talk about universality and accept changes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this man is off his head. He had just said that universality was a sacred trust. Having lost face, he criticizes the Canadian public for not being mature enough. That is utterly ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that all Hon. Members should speak out. I remember that there were a number of PC Members from Western Canada who were against deindexation. A number of them even told the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson): I should like you to show me the senior citizens who are in favour of that. It is a fact that the pals of the Minister of Finance are certainly not the same people I meet.

The people I meet are ordinary people, while his friends and himself are concerned only with money. Are we going to allow this to happen in this holiday season? It is just another scenario full of hypocrisy designed to make it possible for the Prime Minister in his New Year message to list all his so-called achievements. Some people say that we should beware when he starts talking in his sugary fashion and be very careful of what he says. This year, we are thinking of designating a Senior Citizens' Day. No! I want to listen to what other Members have to say about this. I should like to hear what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mrs. Bertrand) really and sincerely thinks of that.