

that the government has managed the financial affairs of this country well is wrong. We believe that the statement of the minister that it will make adjustments as appropriate to this threshold and that Canadians can trust them to do this is not accurate. We do not believe that Canadians can trust this government to do that and we do not believe it will do it.

I submit that the record of the government actions in proposing to reduce the indexation to cut the indexation of pensions, in proposing this very tax and in objecting to these amendments, in deindexing the deductions under the Income Tax Act and numerous other examples of unfair practices in regard to taxation in Canada, all indicate that the government cannot be trusted to do anything it says in relation to fairness or equity for taxpayers.

What the government has done, and I could go through a lot of figures but I am sure some of my colleagues are going to do that, is increase personal taxes on Canadians at an absolutely astronomic rate. For the government to talk about fairness in the tax system is completely ridiculous. It is not the government that should be discussing that. It has increased taxes 32 times since it took office. Many of them are enormous tax increases. I need only cite the goods and services tax as a perfect example of that which we complain about in this House on a regular basis.

As an example, and perhaps the hon. member for Burlington will be interested in this figure, personal taxes, sales taxes and excise taxes accounted for 67 per cent of government revenue in 1987 and 1988 while corporate taxes accounted for only 11 per cent of those revenues in that same year. I think it is an indication of the way the government has gone. It has reduced the taxes on corporations and increased the taxes on ordinary Canadians. This particular clawback tax, this unfair and very regressive tax, this treatment of pension income as something special and worthy of particularly high taxation, is an indication of the unfairness of the tax measures this government proposes.

I submit that the Senate amendments are fair and reasonable. They are not onerous on the government. The Minister of State for Finance should be supporting these amendments. I invite him to vote against the motion he has proposed so that the Senate amendments

can be adopted in this House and we can proceed with the bill as amended.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my friend from Kingston and the Islands. I think we agree, probably 90 per cent of the way, with what he has said. As far as bills having a principle or principles, he suggested that a bill can only have one principle. I suggest that the principals behind this legislation do not have the principles, not the bill.

It is quite an honour today to rise in the House, not because of Bill C-28, but because of the visit of Mr. Mandela. I think it was a moving experience for all of us. It is a privilege to be here to hear a remarkable individual with a great, great cause.

We in the New Democratic Party believe that freedom should be universal. We also believe that old age pensions and family allowances should be universal. Certainly fortuitously, last evening I went into a bookshop and picked up a book written by Susan Mann Trofimenkoff. It is a book about Stanley Knowles.

• (1710)

Little did I know last evening that today is Stanley's eighty-second birthday. I could not put the book down last night. I recommend this as good reading for the government and the Official Opposition because it chronicles which party and which individuals, in particular Mr. Woodsworth and Mr. Knowles, championed over the years Old Age Security, Canada Pension and pensions that were escalated. The word at that time was escalated. They had to be escalated. They were not indexed, they were escalated at 2 per cent per year. I know know it makes excellent reading. I know the members here would bear with me for probably the remaining 15 to 17 minutes that I have because it shows without a doubt that this party in a minority government in the twenties pledged support to whichever party would come through with pensions for Canadians. Eventually the Liberals came through but they screamed all the way. Would you believe in 1926 the House of Commons passed a pension bill but it was defeated in the Senate. I just wonder, if bills could be defeated in the Senate in 1926, why bills could not be vetoed by the Senate in 1990.

Mr. Knowles suggests in his book that the Senate should be abolished and we certainly concur with his indication of what should happen to the Senate. We have difficulty, let there be no doubt, in our party with the Senate. It is some sort of three-headed beast but it is not