

• (1150)

I believe that my time has already expired, Mr. Speaker, but I trust that Hon. Members from my province will take this opportunity to reject a bill which I find completely unacceptable for all those who will be personally affected. Of course, there will be other speeches and other pressures to be made concerning family allowances, old age security, and especially the piece of legislation known as Bill C-133. I believe that we cannot accept the position taken by the Government and its proposals. We were aware that the income of active workers might be restricted in view of the present economic situation, but we would never have thought that the Government would attack the pensioners. If we had been told about this at the start, the Government would never have received the support of my party for its 6 and 5 program. We were misled because this was kept from us, Mr. Speaker! We were not told about it! We are now aware of it and we believe that it is important and vital for us to object to such a measure, and that it is our duty to ask and urge one last time our colleagues from Quebec to do what I am now doing and to promise these public servants that we will fight and vote against this measure because it is discriminatory, unfair and goes against the promise of the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) concerning what was once called a just society and what is now becoming increasingly unjust, as is evidenced once again today.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that my colleagues have understood my message correctly.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) would allow a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I must tell the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) that his time has already expired. A question can therefore be allowed only with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple. The Hon. Member for Joliette spoke for about 10 minutes and I listened very carefully. Is he aware that the motion of his colleague for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) has been grouped with that of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) and does he support the amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton?

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, if the Government wants to make a change which could be of some help to the pensioners, we are quite willing to agree. However, I am still convinced that the bill as a whole is a breach of a commitment made by the Right Hon. Prime Minister of Canada on behalf of his party. We find this unfortunate and regrettable. Because of this, if some improvement can be made, we will vote in favour

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of it, but I am still convinced that this improvement is clearly inadequate.

Mr. Maltais: Would the Hon. Member agree to a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Once again, there has to be unanimous consent for the Hon. Member to ask his question. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Maltais: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Joliette whether it would not be preferable to try capping at 6 and 5 per cent the old age security benefits of people who are entitled to them and use that money to create jobs for younger people about whom the elderly are so concerned. Moreover, I would like to know whether the funds thus saved are used to create jobs for young people. Would older people then not consider the six and five measure more interesting, and I wonder whether the Hon. Member for Joliette would be in favour of that kind of solution?

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, the way the legislation now stands, it seems to me that the Government could recoup \$100 million. If the Government simply needs \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it might cut down by one third on its ministers' and members' junkets. This, I think, would be a way to find the \$100 million. Another way of recuperating \$100 million would be to sell back the 80,000 acres of farm land at Mirabel. There are other sectors where expenditures could be slashed instead of this money being taken out of the pockets of the elderly and retired people. That is what I deplore indeed. Expenditures ought to be cut down in fields where savings could be made without hurting anyone. I fully agree with the Hon. Member that we must direct our efforts towards the creation of jobs for younger people. They do experience an employment crisis, but the fact remains that when this Government came to office 15 years ago we only had 300,000 people out of work whereas their ranks have swollen to nearly 2 million today. I would suggest to my colleagues across the floor that directing questions to the Official Opposition and attempting to hold us responsible for the mess we are in now is not the way to solve the problem, in my opinion. The Government has flopped miserably in the economic sector, to say the least and it is now attacking the elderly and retired people and requiring them to make sacrifices. If the Government wants to help young people get jobs, it could find more appropriate ways to cut down its expenditures.

Mr. Maltais: Perhaps I should ask the Hon. Member for Joliette whether he is aware that the most needy senior citizens are still eligible for the income supplement. The question I want to ask him is this: does the Hon. Member for Joliette agree that those funds be set aside not only for the elderly but for other sectors where the 6 and 5 per cent limit applies,