

Government Orders

• (1620)

The government may argue that that is not the desire, not the intent, not the plan, but it is not able to argue with the figures that are being presented by the members of the opposition, members of the New Democratic Party in particular, that it is helping those who are well off at the expense of those who are not doing well at all.

That is not good enough either. Whether they are totally correct is not the point. The point is the public perception right now. The public perception right now is that the government should be cutting down on expenditures. Whether they are direct expenditures or whether they are indirect, forgoing revenue does not really matter to the public. They want the government to show some example. If the deficit has to be brought under control, the government has to take charge of things. To bring in a program such as this one, which as I said earlier is revenue neutral, is certainly not doing the job.

The government is saying that it is closing doors so that people who have been able to take undue advantage of the RRSP program will not be able to do so any more. That is one of the purposes of this legislation. I am not sure whether the government has done that job well or not, but had it done that job well and stopped there, it would have done something that from the point of view of public perception would be progress. The government would, according to its own figures, be saving a revenue expenditure of some \$350 million. That may not be much in the terms of a \$35 billion deficit, but it is nevertheless going in the right direction. I think this could have been applauded by the public as a whole.

At the same time to bring in a new giveaway program that is not helping those at the bottom of the scale, that is not helping those in the low and middle areas of the scale but is helping those above that, is again going against what I feel the public, certainly the voters in my riding, want. It is going against, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, what the voters in your riding want.

They want us to be helping those who are most disadvantaged. They want us not to be increasing the deficit. They want us to take control of the deficit and indeed reduce it. They want us not to bring in programs that are revenue neutral, but programs that will be

revenue positive at the expense of those in our country who are most able to pay the costs of it rather than try to get more out of those who are least able to pay the cost.

People have been saying that you would have to earn \$86,110 or at least have that amount of income related to the RRSP before you could claim the maximum of \$15,500. That is all very well, but it is indexed. This is one place where it is going to be fully indexed to increases in wages and salaries. In all other programs through which the government is giving money to those least able to survive in our country, it is only partially indexed. I do not know of another program that is indexed so closely to increases in wages and salaries as is the program being described in Bill C-52.

Once again, I would suggest, we are going contrary to the wishes, the desires, and the hopes of the people that we are supposed to be looking after in this country.

We are limiting the assistance to high income taxpayers. That is not what we should be doing. The existing dollar limits are being increased. That is not what we should be doing because it is costing the government revenue. It will eliminate opportunities for excessive or unintended tax deferrals. That is a move in the right direction, but we should not have found some way of giving the revenue that the government is getting by eliminating these schemes to those who need it the least.

The reform should result in no net revenue. On the contrary, the reform should bring in more revenue and that is what the program should have been designed to do.

I suppose the real quarrel we have with this is that it is pushing people into the laps of those who are providing private pension plans as opposed to government plans. We have argued for years that the old age assistance plan is not sufficient. We should be putting more money into that. We have argued for years that the guaranteed income supplement is not sufficient.

The Canada Pension Plan, which is contributed to by workers, employers or by self-employed individuals, is a good plan from the point of view of where the money is being invested. It is a good plan from the point of view that it is building up pensions for people in Canada, but it is deficient in that the amount of the pension is