

Supply

as the "peacemaker" of all things. It is one of the most deadly weapons known to man. I am reminded of the war in Vietnam. At that time, the statistics referred to "hits". What the term really referred to was the bombing and burning of entire villages, inclusive of the innocent women, children and elderly inhabitants of those villages. At that time, the "daily body count" was referred to. What that really meant was the thousands of innocent people who were murdered in the rice paddies and jungles of Vietnam. Body count, hits, peacemakers and deindexation are neutral words. They belie what is really taking place.

● (1650)

I think it would be appropriate for us to take a moment or two to identify precisely what the deindexation of OAS will mean to senior citizens of Canada. In 1986, senior citizens will each lose \$64 from their annual OAS income. That is not to say that OAS will not be in place, but that based on what senior citizens should expect to receive through indexation which protects them from inflation, they will receive \$64 less in 1986. In 1987, they will receive \$171 less than they should expect. By 1988, senior citizens will receive \$284 less than they should expect. In 1989, it will be \$402, in 1990 it will be \$526 and in 1991 it will be \$680. It goes on and on.

In the next five years, senior citizens who are collecting OAS will each lose a total of \$1,447. This is a very serious matter. I do hope that government Members have a chance to respond to my comments during the question and answer period because in the next five years, every single senior citizen in Canada will lose through deindexation \$1,447.

I will not even discuss what this loss will mean to the communities through a loss to each senior citizen over the next five years of nearly \$1,500. I do not want to discuss what that will mean to the small business communities. I simply want to speak about what this means to senior citizens.

In 1991, we will have slashed from the purses and pocket-books of all the senior citizens across Canada \$6.6 billion. If we add up what all the senior citizens of Canada will lose by 1991 as a result of this provision, it will total \$6.6 billion. This is an extremely serious matter. It is taking place at a time when most senior citizens are simply struggling to survive.

My mother and father are two of those struggling senior citizens. They receive OAS and GIS benefits. The lifestyle that they are able to afford today is a very modest one. When I find that the Government is going to take from the pocket-books, rip from the hands and slash from the wallets of senior citizens \$6.6 billion over the next five years, I say that something is very seriously wrong with the Government's approach to reducing the deficit or whatever else it wants to use to justify this unbelievable measure.

Needless to say, hardest hit will be senior women. Today, 60 per cent of senior women are living below the poverty line. This measure will simply make that situation worse. Today, in 1985, 1.8 million senior citizens live below the poverty line. They live in poverty, but the Government is now planning to take, over the next five years, nearly \$1,500 from each of their

incomes. That is why we felt it was appropriate to have this debate today. That is why we are collecting petitions from every area of the country. To be fair about this, we are trying to bring some pressure to bear on the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp), who are responsible for this dastardly deed.

Over the last number of days as this problem has sunk into the minds of the people across the country, the airlines coming to Ottawa have been filled with delegations representing all kinds of organizations that have concern for seniors. The Association of Jewish Seniors from the metropolitan area of Toronto representing 5,000 seniors, the Ontario division of the Canadian Pensioners Concerned representing 10,000 seniors, the United Senior Citizens of Ontario representing 300,000 seniors, the National Anti-Poverty Organization, the Canadian Council for Social Development, the National Council of Welfare, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women are representing hundreds of thousands of senior citizens across this country. As these groups have visited the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Health and Welfare and Members, they have been unanimous in their condemnation of the deindexing of senior citizens' pensions.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare says that he has been talking to all kinds of senior citizens' groups and meeting with individuals. Today during Question Period, I asked him if he could, to enlighten the House, name a single one of whom he has spoken. We know of all kinds of groups that have approached the House of Commons saying that they condemn this measure because it will cause undue pain and suffering and will result in hundreds of thousands more senior citizens reaching poverty levels. I asked the Minister if he could name a single group which supports him. He could not do so. He mumbled and fumbled around and baffle-gabbed a little bit, but he could not name a single group in Canada that supports this particular aspect of the Budget. I find that despicable.

The Minister of Finance has said that he cannot bring in a minimum tax at this time because he must consult with a variety of groups and with the provinces. Perhaps that is fair. He said that he could not now bring in changes to the corporate tax system because he must consult for months and months with the various corporations and corporate organizations. However, there was no consultation, no discussion, no visitation and no meetings before the Government imposed the deindexing of senior citizens' pensions.

Government Members spoke to no one. As a matter of fact, as I indicated at the outset of my talk, they misled the people of Canada. The Prime Minister and government Members said that they would not deindex pensions. They are honourable Members. I suppose the people felt that they had to trust the Prime Minister when he said that he would not do that. It came as a real surprise when that in fact was exactly what he did.

I would like to urge the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Health and Welfare to