

Government Orders

Why should Canadians believe the government when it says: "Don't worry, we will take care of you"? What is going to happen down the road? In a few months or next year the government could reduce the figure for a clawback on the old age pension from \$50,000 to perhaps \$40,000. Or, if it is \$40,000, why not \$35,000?

The important fact is that we must maintain the universality of the program to guarantee that the programs will be there when Canadians need them.

The government wants to reduce the deficit. It says that it is important to have these changes made because it is spending too much money and it is having problems with the deficit. There are some very simple solutions. Three to five hundred million dollars is not a lot of money. One simple solution would be to put a fair tax on the \$27 billion dollars corporations make in this country which are not taxed at all. Even in the United States under Ronald Reagan they introduced a minimum 10 per cent corporation tax.

If we introduced a 10 per cent tax in this country it would bring in \$2.7 billion. That would be enough not only to pay for this program, the \$300 to \$500 million, but it would certainly help pay for a proper child care program.

If this government would impose fair taxes on all Canadians, certainly on those who are making over \$100,000, it would go a long way to reducing the deficit and to providing some encouragement and some incentive for Canadians to want to try and to want to work. Unfortunately, the way it stands now, middle income Canadians and small business people who are trying to get ahead are paying an unfair share of taxes.

Through the bill before the House today the government wants to change the idea of universality. It is an insidious attack on the whole concept of universality that has been so long accepted by this Parliament and certainly by this country.

The government has imposed time allocation on this bill. It has been imposing time allocation and closure ever since the thirty-fourth Parliament convened. This government has imposed more time allocation and closure in one year than virtually all governments in the history of this country. This government says that it is considerate of the people, that it listens to the people,

that it wants to consult with Canadians, but its actions are totally different from its words.

It muzzles Canadians. It muzzles members of Parliament who wanted to speak on behalf of their constituents. That is simply not fair, it is not just, and it is not right. This is not a government that listens. This is not a government that is caring. This is not a government that is compassionate.

The CCF and the NDP were the parties in this country that were responsible for much of the social legislation, the social system that existed in this country before the Tories took power. Our party fought for 50 years in this House and throughout this country for this type of program.

This government, the Progressive Conservative party, has dismantled much of it in five years. It is a tragedy. This government has undone many of the achievements the NDP has contributed to this country.

We have very recently elected a new leader of our party. I know that our leader and the rest of our party certainly have our work cut out for us just to put back in place or just to regain the achievements that we fought so hard and so long to gain for the people of Canada.

• (1640)

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, I have one concern about this debate, and that is that the concentration on the clawback is detracting from other provisions in the bill that equally deserve our attention, changes which are damaging to small Canadian businesses.

We have no choice. This clawback is so outrageous, so offensive to fundamental values we have taken for granted for half a century that members have no alternative but to speak out strongly and loudly and for as long as they can on it. I regret that other important and damaging measures in this bill are not receiving the attention they deserve, but I think there is no option for members of the House except to address it, to attach to it the offensive term of clawback, and to continue attacking it.

I want to talk about the effect on the family allowance. The family allowance goes back over half a century. It was brought in by government in support of families, in recognition of the additional costs to families of raising children with a reasonable level of security. When it first came in it represented, for many families, 50 per cent of