

*Supply*

everyone in the country. The people who should benefit first, as we have said, are the Canadian senior citizens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. de Jong). He has less than a minute left in the question and comment period.

**Mr. de Jong:** It is unfortunate that the Minister used the question and comment period for most of his speech. The point I would like to make is, first, the Minister went against the Liberals because they introduced the five and six program. At that time he also voted against six and five. He cannot have it both ways. Canada, on a per capita basis, is the second lowest spender on social programs among OECD countries. To say the reason we have this huge deficit is because we are giving too much money to our old folks in social programs, I think, is unbelievable. The Minister talks about the deficit. Indeed, that is a very important point. He makes reference to the R and D tax credit being a scam. I stood in my place in this House and asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Beatty) about that scam.

● (1700)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Order, please. The period for questions and comments is now over.

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, we have put forward today a motion which is couched in very reasonable terms. We have done so in order to elicit a sense of co-operation and understanding across the floor, and also to give courage to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) in his deliberations. Instead we have heard in a speech by the Minister a Minister of Finance speaking to us. I wonder whether there is something wrong with a Minister of Finance who needs the help of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, or whether there is something wrong with a Minister of National Health and Welfare who has to project his speech in defence of a mandate which was not given to him in the first place. Something is wrong when a Government begins to operate in that fashion. This is particularly so at a time when senior citizens across the country are sending in petitions to Ottawa from ridings everywhere. Outrage is spreading across the country, and it is legitimate that we should ask ourselves, regardless of the Party we belong to, why this is happening. Evidently one group of citizens has been asked to make a sacrifice while another has not. I will explain.

The Government is asking pensioners to accept an erosion in their purchasing power of 3 per cent per year beginning in 1986. This quickly turns out to be approximately \$120 in the first year, and that amount will grow in subsequent years. It did not take a long time for people to see through what this portion of the Budget meant to them as pensioners. People affected by this are therefore up in arms. They have discovered that they were deceived by the Progressive Conservative Party. They were deceived in the last election because of the promises made and they were deceived when, last December, as a result of an uproar on this side of the House, the concept of universality was retained or salvaged which, in itself, meant

retaining also the purchasing power and indexing of people's pensions. When people discover they have been deceived, they get angry. That is normal and natural and it happens to each one of us. This is why the petitions are coming in and will continue to come in between now and the end of the month. They will continue to pour in over the summer if we sit over the summer. The phone calls are coming in by the dozens because evidently people are angry.

What is the Government doing in this situation? Well, the Government is on the run, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is retreating. He is now talking of a proposal. It is no longer a Budget measure or decision. All of a sudden we hear the unthinkable, that it is now a proposal. The Government is saying that it is changing its mind and the Tory back-benchers, and I do not blame them at all, are on their knees. They are pushing for change because they do not want to go back to their ridings and face the music. They know they are going to face the music and they would like to go home with an ease in their mind and their political consciences. This is why the motion we put on the Order Paper today is an attempt to somehow be helpful to them. It is an opportunity to say look let us get together and resolve this nonsense.

Canadians have seen through the rhetoric of this Government. They have seen that the promises made in social policies as well as are rapidly evaporating with the passage of time. We have seen the outstanding public relations that the Prime Minister was able to develop over the last few months vanish because he is now talking a language different from that of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). That Minister is still promoting his Budget. He is still pushing ahead with his measures, but he does not seem to have the support of his Prime Minister. There is some wavering taking place over there.

It would be interesting to know what went on in Cabinet this morning as we see where this Government is heading in light of these developments. The Minister of Finance said on Budget night that there shall be deindexation of the OAS; the Prime Minister is now saying there may be deindexation. In a few weeks the Prime Minister is likely to say that there shall be no deindexation at all. We will then ask him why he subjected the pensioners of Canada to the anxiety they have been living with these days. Why was it necessary to provoke such an uproar?

Why ask the grandparents, with a rhetoric which only the Prime Minister is capable of, to pay for alleged jobs created for their grandchildren by way of deindexation? Have you ever seen such distorted rhetoric in your life? It is as if this generation of pensioners has to finance the jobs of their grandchildren in the market-place now that they have reached retirement age. I sometimes wonder what is the logic process in the minds of this Government. Therefore, it is inevitable that one would conclude that the whole basis of this Budget is ill-conceived.

No one in his right mind would remove a tax on the oil companies and shift the burden, in a way, to the pensioners in order to make up for the lost revenue. Nobody in his right mind would go for the \$500,000 capital gains concession, a