

*Old Age Security Act (No. 2)*

budget for all federal Government departments is \$70 million. This money is spent for advertising its six and five program and how it will beat inflation. This same Government increases its deficit spending by 18 per cent to 20 per cent. That does not make sense to me.

Although the Government has told us of the need to control inflation, it is its own spending which has caused that high inflation. The Government injects money into the market which, in reality, should not be there. I cannot think of anything worse than the money the Government has wasted on advertising. It is immoral for the Government to increase its spending by 18 per cent while turning on a particular segment of our population which least deserves the treatment it is being given by this Government. They are citizens of Canada whom we represent in this House and we must protest that treatment. They were the pioneers who did without.

I am sure that if Hon. Members would reflect upon that for a moment they would remember what their grandparents must have gone through to ensure that they would receive a better education and a higher standard of living. Surely every family experienced the same thing. All of us did not live in affluence 50 years or 75 years ago. I still see those sacrifices in the northern parts of Alberta today. I still see people who spent their whole lives building communities by clearing the land in order to have something to pass on to their children. I have seen that and I know that Hon. Members have seen that. Go to northern Quebec, where many generations of families have lived and passed on the fruits of their hard work to their children. The Government is saying: "Thank you, senior citizens, thank you, pioneers; the people who laid the foundations and built Canada, thank you very much, but now we will reduce your Old Age Security". That is utterly sickening. It is immoral.

● (1240)

The Government and the Minister of National Health and Welfare know full well, as the Minister stated in the House, that the senior citizens know where their responsibilities lies. The Government makes that appeal to the very people who do know what sacrifice is all about.

I am utterly ashamed that Members in the House would allow and vote for an attack on the senior citizens. It does not sound like very big dollars are involved. It will amount only to about \$90 or so this year, and amount only to \$250 or \$300 next year. For some senior citizens, that is equivalent to two months' rent next year. For some senior citizens, that means the difference as to whether they have meat on the table or not. We know that Hon. Members opposite agree that it will affect some senior citizens who have private incomes and will not hurt them very much. However, there is a borderline group of 50,000 to 75,000 senior citizens who do not deserve the treatment they are receiving. It is wrong.

I think that every Hon. Member, if he searches his conscience, will know full well it is wrong and immoral. I would ask them to search their consciences and think back to the tremendous sacrifices made for them by their parents and

grandparents. Those are the kinds of people we are touching. If they do this, they will vote against the Bill and against closure.

**Mr. Darling:** Right on.

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I rise with a little sadness to take part in the debate. I support the amendment which is being proposed right now, but it is certainly no solution to the problems which Bill C-131 will inflict on over one million elderly Canadians.

I have a few comments on the debate so far, not only in terms of closure being brought in, but also concerning the peculiarity of the debate. I have not heard any high-rolling speeches from Liberal Members which can be sent out to pensioners across the country as to why this is so good for them. I heard one Liberal Member say that the six and five, in relation to Bill C-131, deals with inflation. The elderly in my riding, whether in Smithers, Atlin, Cassiar or on the Queen Charlotte Islands, know that the six and five program being brought in is not helping them with inflation. It is taking food from their mouths and part of their rent money. It is taking all kinds of funds away from them because inflation will remain higher. The Consumer Price Index will remain higher in 1983 and 1984.

I would like to hear some Hon. Members opposite stand up and give speeches, because I have sent copies of the ones they have given thus far to people in my riding. In those same packages I have also included speeches put on the record by Conservative Members and by those in my caucus. I have received some interesting comments in reply, which I will draw on some time later in my speech today.

In touching on the issue of Liberals not really standing up and sending a strong message out there, I would also say that a very strange boomerang kind of message is being sent out by the Tories. I remember watching them stand up in the House when the six and five program was brought in in principle. They were pretty quick to get on the bandwagon and try to send the signal out to the business community that they were all in favour of six and five and that they would fight to see that it was applied in principle throughout.

Right at the moment that a Liberal backbencher rose and said that the six and five program, in relation to OAS, is to fight inflation, the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Campbell) pointed out that for veterans it was in fact indexed at 11.5 per cent as of January 1 of this year. Again, the peculiarity of the kind of legislation which is now being brought forward by that side of the House is that it will not affect veterans. We are gradually seeing the whole concept of the means test rolled in, not only in relation to pensions and the OAS, but ultimately in relation to the GIS as well.

Let us run through a few facts so that we know exactly what we are dealing with. In relation to the 6 per cent being applied in 1983 instead of the Consumer Price Index, which would certainly be a few percentage points higher, even according to the Government's own estimates it will be 1 per cent above the 10; so we are looking at roughly a 50 per cent cut in the kind