

*Government Orders*

cavalier and arrogant fashion he says, "Why does the loyal opposition bother itself with the affairs of a mere 4 per cent of the Canadian population, a mere 4 per cent?"

I suppose that that kind of negative criticism by the Minister of Finance stands us in good stead. We are proud to be able to say that we have received accolades from the Minister of Finance for supporting all Canadians, be they small in number, be their numbers so minute in quantity that they need someone who truly represents democracy at its very essence. But that 4 per cent represents Canadians who have been the most productive, those who have gone through their life making sacrifices upon which this country has been built and upon which I dare say this government today still draws great benefit.

Yet the Minister of Finance and the chairman of the finance committee from Mississauga South, who is here today to listen to this debate will say, and without even a shamed-face smile, that the country can no longer afford to give benefit to those people who have deserved it by their responsibilities, by their contributions, by their efforts, by their enterprise and by the taxes that they have contributed to the revenues of this state.

One no longer knows whether to cry or to laugh. The arrogance, the gall of such a statement from the government side belies that in fact we are headed purposely towards an elitist society wherein those who are well-off are treated in a fashion that is favourable, to say the least, because they are seen to be, in the opinion of the Minister of Finance, those who are most likely to contribute greater investment and entrepreneurial resources to this country. The rest of us who do not fit into that category can look forward to facing bills and legislation such as Bill C-28 in which whatever benefits are accrued to us will be clawed back.

Why go through this charade? Why not be honest? Why not say you are no longer entitled to any benefits merely because you have contributed, merely because you pay taxes, merely because your entrepreneurial skills and your sacrifices generate great wealth upon which this society shall be based?

• (1550)

We can no longer tolerate a government that tells us one thing and does another, and thinks that it can get away with such pacts. We can no longer tolerate misleading directions—I hesitated for a moment because the word "lie" was going to utter forth from my lips and I did not want to commit an unparliamentary statement and attribute it to members opposite. But, quite frankly, the Canadian public is looking at this debate and saying, "Why have we been misled? Why can we not have direct, straightforward debate? If we cannot afford something, say so at the very beginning. Tell us how we must pay for it. If this benefit is good, then it must be good for all of us."

Those who are less well off are no less reluctant to give equal benefits, similar benefits to those who are well off. Those who are well off enjoy that benefit because they are members of this society, not simply because they have the good fortune to have more resources, financial or otherwise, than perhaps others in Canadian society. If we establish a base of principle, that principle, that base applies to each and every one of us. There should be no discrimination, and definitely there should be no discrimination on the basis of age. Here we have the government trying to hide the fact that today those who are 65 will receive no benefits once they are at \$60,000. We have seen today in Question Period the Minister of Finance refuse to give any kind of assurances or guarantees—not that they would be worth much, he has proven this much, or not that they would be worth anything at all—that that particular threshold would be reduced.

In fact, we know that this is nothing more than a Trojan horse to upset, overturn, and destroy the society we have worked so long to construct and build.

**Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak on Motion No. 4 which seeks to delete the clawback provision of Bill C-28. Let me begin by explaining the difference between tax back and clawback. Tax back means that you remove a certain percentage of income from taxpayers. Clawback means you remove the whole thing.

Universality means that programs are applied to everyone equally. Clawback in this case means that for a certain segment of the population you are going to remove that program. You start off by clawing back family allowances to families where one income earner