

pension, reduced by the old age pension because you get that as well, but then we are going to tax back the old age pension. Sorry, but your pension plan does not provide for your defined benefit plan to come back into full operation."

Therefore, those people are clawed back twice. The government did not really have time to think about any of those problems. They did not even want to hear about them. They did not even want witnesses to come to the committee to talk about it. When they did talk about it, they could not fix it because of the incompetent way in which they had presented the bill. Then some of them have the incredible audacity to come into the House of Commons and try to tell us that the seniors really don't mind. The seniors don't mind.

They do mind. I have in front of me a number of press releases and other items issued by groups like *One Voice Seniors' Network* where they talk about how their views were represented to the people of Canada.

On May 16, 1989, *One Voice Seniors' Network* released a statement which stated:

Seniors Deplore Ministers' Remarks

Monique Vézina, federal Minister of State for Seniors, raised the ire of the powerful seniors' movement with comments she made last week concerning their reactions to Michael Wilson's budget.

"We don't appreciate having our views taken out of context and distorted to suit the government's public relations machine," said Jean Woodsworth, President of *One Voice*—

That rebuke was not enough. Earlier this month in this House the Minister of Finance tried to suggest that *One Voice Seniors' Network* supported the clawback. Again, *One Voice* had to issue a press release dated December 6, 1989:

Seniors were appalled yesterday to see their words twisted to support the government's controversial clawback legislation. Jean Woodsworth, President of *One Voice*, the Canadian Seniors Network, claims that their pre-budget brief is being used against Canadians in an underhanded way.

"Mr. Wilson invited us to consult on the budget while it was in preparation. At that meeting, he specifically promised us he promised us he would not touch universal social programs, but then he went ahead and proposed this awful clawback. That was a real betrayal. But now he's taking our own words out of the context of our brief to make it look as though we agree with the clawback. This simply is not what we

Government Orders

said. Mr. Wilson has aggravated the anger and mistrust seniors are already feeling".

This was raised in the House of Commons, and a response was made by the Minister of State for Privatization and Regulatory Affairs. He had to receive a letter then from *One Voice Seniors' Network*. This is what they said to him:

Your reference to our organization and to my supposed comments in particular as supporting the clawback have created a mistaken impression in the House.

That had to be raised and the minister confronted with it. Mrs. Woodsworth had the following to say:

It has been the consistent position of *One Voice* that the clawback is a serious threat to universality of Canada's social benefit programs, and we have never supported the measure. I know that I personally never made such a comment.

We have contacted the Economic Council of Canada and they have been unable to locate any report which makes a reference to the clawback or the \$50,000 threshold.

What concerns us more is that the clawback was not announced until the budget was released in April. We wonder how discussion of the clawback or the \$50,000 threshold could have taken place in February before it had been announced in April.

That is what this government has been doing to distort the words of seniors, and they will not even listen to these people. That is why they closed the hearings on universality and on the clawback.

● (1720)

I would like to suggest that we have been listening. We, on this side of the House of Commons, have been listening and we have been hearing a lot. I have heard members on the other side say in this House that nobody out there was concerned. I cannot believe that they are not getting some of these same letters.

The following letter comes from one of my constituents, Normand Anctil who states:

I retired from the Public Service last month after over 31 years of service in the public sector including over 24 years in the Navy. I have been working hard and looking forward to this time in life for many a year.

Throughout my service I have accumulated some savings in the form of RRSPs which coupled with my superannuation, CPP, OAS and good health I felt would provide me with the means to live with dignity, independence and a good quality of life.

But, what do I see on the horizon? More increases in taxes and the one thing I have been paying for during my service to my country, in fact during all of my working life, the one thing I considered as part of