

*Supply*

There is a long list of what it means to be Canadian. Slowly but surely the Government is ridding us of all the vestiges of what being Canadian is all about.

As my hon. friend says, the Conservatives have virtually doubled the debt of the country in five short years. The Minister of Finance says that the reason for all these cruel, heavy-handed, unjust provisions in the Budget is to reduce the deficit. He tells us in the next breath that the deficit will actually go up this year and next year. One must ask what is the motive. Why is the Government causing such far-reaching devastation to the country?

It is simple. This is stage two of the free trade deal with the United States. Our Prime Minister promised President Reagan that he would try to make Canada like the United States. He promised that he would try to drive down and depress our quality of life to approximate that quality of life in the southern states. That is what he promised. Unfortunately for Canadians who were misled, that is what he is doing.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, the motion moved today by the Liberal Party condemns the Conservative Government for doing a hatchet job on social programs and for attacking and in fact putting an end to the universality of these programs. We must remember that we have three major social programs in this country that are cherished by all Canadians and are universal: old age security pensions, family allowances and medicare, which is universal and free.

Mr. Speaker, we must recall that these programs are not welfare. They were not given to us as a kind of charity. There was no means test to be eligible for old age security, family allowances or health care across this country.

Canada's seniors are right when they say that universality is on the way out as result of the surtax on old age security and family allowances. An editorial in *Le Devoir* said that this spelled the end of universal social programs. Some people will say that the Government's hypocritical approach does not deprive social programs,

old age security or family allowances of their universality. I believe this is the beginning of the end of universality, because before these proposals were made, all Canadians aged 65 and over would receive their old age security pension cheques, and at the end of the fiscal year, when they did their tax returns, they would add up their old age security cheques, their RRSP income, their investment income and rental income. There is no justification for a surtax on old age security, because these benefits are already more highly taxed than income from an RRSP which itself is tax free.

What the Tories are proposing this year is an all out attack on old age security cheques, and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Corbeil) says: those earning \$50,000 or more. I am defending people with that kind of income, because tomorrow, they will go after the \$10,000 group.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, who are these people with an income of \$50,000 or more? They are the fathers and mothers of most of the Members in this House. They are Canadians who are now 65 and who raised their children in some very difficult circumstances. These are the families, the elderly, who had to pay at the time because there was no medicare hospital insurance. What the Minister of Labour does not know is that from 1952 to 1972, these senior citizens paid a special tax to be eligible for universal social programs.

I know the Minister of Labour is not aware of that—he does'nt know.

• (1300)

As we saw today, those people accepted to pay a special tax in order to qualify for a program that is now taken away from them. How can people trust this Government after such actions?

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens today—but this is the second time this Tory Government is attacking Old Age Security Pensions. They started with deindexation, but thank God and the Liberal Party and senior citizens, after seven weeks of fighting during which all Conservative Members expressed their support for deindexation after what Mrs. Denis told the Prime Minister on Parliament Hill—Charlie Brown!—he had to apologize