

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, there is one man here who told us what to do. He sits right across the chamber from me. His name is David Croll. He spoke the other day on the prospects of a new government in the province of Ontario. He was outlining his view as to how it should approach the task it faces. In his usual succinct, down-to-earth, and, may I say, inspired fashion, he said these words:

Show compassion. Attend to the needy before you get down to business. And then it should be a cake-walk.

That was the advice he gave to the Government of Ontario. I am going to take those words of his as advice to me and to the government which I support.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition):** I wonder whether the Leader of the Government would accept just one question?

**Senator Roblin:** I would be delighted to answer just one question, if I could believe that it was only one.

**Senator MacEachen:** I will confine myself to one question; that is a promise. Earlier in the day, our colleague, Senator Sinclair, asked whether there were fixed points in the review period at which the monitoring would become decision. I notice that the Leader of the Government used the expression "when the next budget rolls around." Are we to take it from that that there would not be any change in the current policy of the government before the next budget?

**Senator Roblin:** If I left that impression, I am glad to correct it. This business of watching the impact of the policy is one which, contrary to what I intimated in the house the other day, is not limited in time nor does it start at a particular period of time. Obviously, pensions are not changed for 12 months, so there is that leeway. Circumstances, however, will certainly change before then—and I am thinking particularly of the economy. While it is not possible to give any benchmark, because those things are not predictable, these are factors that will be considered in the government's monitoring of the impact of the policy.

**Hon. Earl A. Hastings:** Would the honourable senator permit another question?

**Senator Roblin:** Yes.

**Senator Hastings:** I have accepted his advice and his counsel, as he knows I normally do, and have listened very carefully to the words he had to say to us this afternoon. He said two or three times that he would deal with the promise. All I can really get from his speech is that it might just as well have been made in 1935 as 1985.

**Senator Murray:** That is because your mind is back there.

**Senator Hastings:** There was no real substance there for the 2.5 million Canadians who are concerned, today, about the future of their cheques. Senator Roblin mentioned that we cannot overlook the future. I have to ask this question: Does this government not understand that for the old age pensioner the future is now? Does the government not comprehend that

old age pensioners cannot accept a promise of something in the sweet bye and bye? Honourable senators, we are going to get there soon enough. To the old age pensioner, the future is now—today. This idea that something may happen in the future is simply repugnant to the old age pensioner. All he can now expect is to be monitored. That puts the old age pensioners pretty fairly in the same category as the Canadian Petroleum Association which will be monitored, too, according to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, except that the old age pensioners were not treated in quite the same way in the budget as the multinationals were treated.

My question is this: Is the government going to honour the promise made by the Prime Minister in Sherbrooke July 26 when he said that a Conservative government would fully index old age pensions? Yes or no?

**Senator Roblin:** There is not going to be any yes or no answer to that question.

**Senator Frith:** Oh, no!

**Senator Roblin:** The policy of the government was stated in the budget, and that is the point on which I am going to take my stand. My honourable friend can go on about the oil industry all he likes, but he knows perfectly well that that is part of the job-making process that is going on now. I know that he is an honest enough man to admit that he is going to find more jobs in his own province of Alberta now than he would have found before. Ultimately, that is going to act as a benefit to all.

When our budgetary situation enables us to give a positive answer to this question—as I have some hope that it might—it will be given. But I wonder just how often he has told the old age pensioners, whose petitions he has so faithfully presented in this house, that their pensions would be going up in the second quarter of this year, that their pensions would be going up in the third quarter of this year, that their pensions would be going up in the fourth quarter of this year, that their pensions would not be affected by this measure until the second quarter of 1986, and at that time, the cost for that year would be \$64.

● (1710)

That is a lot of money, particularly for those people; but I think that had he told them the facts as to what they face, they would be a little more patient than he is in allowing the government to review the matter.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Hastings:** Honourable senators, I don't—

**An Hon. Senator:** You are only allowed one question.

**Senator Hastings:** I don't have to tell them the facts. They are well aware of the facts, and they are well aware of what awaits them in the future.

You mentioned that 85 per cent were satisfied with their present economic state. That was on June 6. That is when they had a little bit of faith in your government. That is when they