

### *Supply*

medicare; (3) will fall most severely on Canadians of moderate means while costing the wealthy little; and

That this House, therefore, condemn the Government for this attempt to violate this sacred trust.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before we started Question Period there were 10 minutes left in the question and comment period of the speech from the Hon. the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On questions and comments, the Hon. Member for Kamloops.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to the Hon. Minister's presentation, and regardless of the points he was making, the truth of the matter would be that a number of senior citizens will not be retaining their OAS cheques as a result of this Budget measure, in terms of what they call a claw-back provision for pensioners.

I would like to ask the Minister the following question, based on a little historic precedent. Back in 1925 when this began during a Liberal minority Government, a rather visionary labour Member of Parliament who with his partner, held the balance of power, introduced an Old Age Pension Bill. It passed the House in 1926 with a Liberal minority Government. At that time it was opposed by the Conservatives in the House. It was then blocked in the Senate by the Conservative majority of the day, much the same as the Liberal majority blocked the free trade deal.

An election was called and the arguments made at the time by Conservative Senators primarily were that any idea of a pension would hurt families because it would remove the obligation of children to care for their elderly parents. They also said that if we gave a pension to everyone, some criminals would get the pension and that would not be right. It would encourage people not to save to prepare for their retirement years.

An election was called and not suprisingly, the Conservatives were absolutely trounced and Mackenzie King reintroduced the Old Age Pension Bill. Even then it was opposed unanimously by the Tories in the House. It was even opposed again by the Conservatives in the Senate but they reluctantly let it pass because the people had spoken in the general election.

I remember reading my history, although I was not around in those days, that the Conservatives opposed the principle of giving a pension to anybody. Well, a lot has happened since then.

I would like to ask the Minister, is this not a reflection of that old Conservative view that charity has a place but any idea that everyone would actually collect a pension cheque based on their rights as Canadian citizens is something that the Conservative party simply cannot accept?

**An Hon. Member:** That is right.

**Mr. Beatty:** No, Mr. Speaker, it is not. I was in intrigued that the hon. gentleman should reach back to I believe 19—

**Mr. Riis:** 1925.

**An Hon. Member:** That is before you were born.

**Mr. Beatty:** Yes, it was some 24 years before I was born and the hon. gentleman is still living in the past. He does not recognize the realities of 1989 are markedly different from the realities of 1924. For example, the hon. gentleman does not seem to be aware of the fact that in this Budget the Government sets aside a further \$865 million in payments to seniors because we believe that this generation has an obligation to seniors who saw us through the Depression and who helped to build for us the sort of society that my generation is privileged to have today.

There is a fundamental question here and that is whether or not we believe as Members of Parliament and as Canadians that in the attack that we make on this mountain of federal debt those of us who are better off should be asked to carry more of the burden. The historic position of the New Democratic Party had been that wealthier Canadians should be asked to pay more. Indeed, the Member for Yukon (Ms. McLaughlin), today was up on her feet demanding—

**An Hon. Member:** Income tax.

**Mr. Beatty:** Exactly. Demanding that taxes should be increased upon wealthy Canadians.

They talk out of both sides of their mouths. When the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) does precisely that and says that the top 4 per cent of pensioners will be asked to contribute some of that pension back, they cry foul and they say that we are oppressing the rich by doing this and that it is unacceptable to them.

The 96 per cent of Canadians who are not touched by this, the lower 96 per cent, recognize that it is fair that those of us who are wealthier should be asked to carry our fair share of the burden. Our policy in a society which continues to age and age gracefully is to protect