

Senior Citizens' Day

citizens come to us and say: Sir, I have to choose my housing on the basis of what I get.

Mr. Speaker, a great many of these older people—something my hon. colleagues have recognized—have built this country and provided us with what we have today. Now that they need the Government, the Government is saying to them: Listen, you must share in the sacrifices. You still have obligations and you will have to do without an indexation which would provide you with the basic requirements.

Today, we are discussing the possibility of designating a Senior Citizens' Day. This demonstrates clearly to what extent this Government is odious and irresponsible in its dealings with older people, some of them came to Ottawa very recently to denounce this injustice and say: Listen to us, gentlemen, who are managing the country: we need what to us appears to be essential. In order to eat decently, we need not only what you are giving us but a little more, and there is no way we want to give up our indexing. But you are telling them: Listen, you have sons and daughters in the university, you will have to tighten your belts in order to allow us as a Government to give them a little more. But I will say to you honestly: You do not go to your constituencies, you do not speak with those senior citizens, in other words you are completely disconnected from reality.

Mr. Speaker, hardly a few months have passed since that historical insult to senior citizens, and the Government is now saying here in this House: Let us have a national day for senior citizens. My view is this is a slap in the face, an insult that is too horrendous for words. You think this will make them forgive, make them forget what you just did to them a few months ago?

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens are most responsible people, people who have developed over the years a wisdom that is a real wealth to this country. They are people who, in difficult times, in hard times, are capable of listening to reason, of willingly accepting sacrifices and sensible measures. But they are not imbeciles, they can see day after day through what you have been doing since you came to power. They are well aware that hardly a few hours ago you wanted us to push through a \$800 million-plus blank cheque for people who are very well off indeed. Those seniors do not understand and do not accept such a way of managing the affairs of this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, it takes a lot of nerve to come up with such an unbelievable initiative, an initiative that, as I said, is truly an insult to those people who worked all their lives and are now in 1985 at the mercy of a society which they themselves have built, and developed, entirely dependent on a small cheque over which they have no control whatsoever and for which they impatiently wait to buy the things that are simply essential. Those people, as I said, who have to plan months ahead for expenses that often to us their juniors look irrational, things we could easily do without but which those people need; they are in crying need of all that we are giving them,

and their only way of coping with the future is the hope of having that part we call indexing, and now members opposite are saying: "They agree with that, they are responsible people, they are willing to do without indexing". And we are told: "We are for universality but against indexing".

Senior citizens had an opportunity, as you very well remember and as you will remember for quite some time yet, believe me, to state that indexing was a vital issue for them. And now, to have them forget, to have them forgive that historical insult, you are offering them a national day. I think it shows very clearly your absolutely irresponsible way of managing the country, when you directly attack those people whom we, their juniors, definitely need and whom we have a clear responsibility and obligation to support, and to defend, something which apparently you have completely forgotten since you came here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for Laurier (Mr. Berger). There are 30 seconds left.

● (1840)

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say that I also find it incredible that the Hon. Member for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Hudon) would say that deindexing family allowances and the old age security pension is not the same as removing universality. It is obvious that he does not understand the basic facts of this issue.

Mr. Speaker, this week—

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques (Mr. Guilbault) on a point of order.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member who is now speaking.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a problem about how to interpret the arrangement made in the House about an hour ago. May I ask Your Honour to read it so that everyone will know what is involved?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): I do not have the text of the arrangement itself. As I understand the agreement made in the House when this debate began, at 6:41, when the debate comes to an end, the Speaker will put the question, but there will not be a recorded vote. This is what I intend to do in a few minutes. This means that—

[English]

There would be no recorded vote on this specific motion.

[Translation]

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I understand quite well, but I repeat that there seems to be some confusion. In my opinion, the only way to clear up this confusion would be for Your Honour to read the exact text of the agreement. It