

vanced society that does not distribute some variety of family allowance to parents”.

• (1540)

I would be remiss in any speech on old age security if I did not refer to *One Voice* and their thoughts on universality. Let me just quote one small section from their brief to the legislative committee on Bill C-28, a committee that allowed so few of the people of Canada to speak because of the Conservative majority. That is very, very shameful. The quote is this, “In fact, the government could have introduced the clawback at \$30,000 but it chose not to do so. Why? Because the clawbacks would then be seen not as a tax of the wealthy but for what it really is, recovery of benefits from part of the population. This is an attack on the universality of Canada’s social programs”.

Every one of these groups recognizes this for what it is. It is for that reason that I stand today and support the motion of the loyal opposition, a motion that we have also put forward, which motion would delete the clawback provisions within this bill.

This bill is an attack on universality. It is an attack on families. It is an attack on seniors. We on this side of the House will not prescribe to the little song, “A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down,” because we are choking on the bits of gruel that we are thrown on this side of the House. We will not stand for it any longer.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, until just a few moments ago I was under the impression, quite frankly, that the government was going to proceed as it has on so many other occasions in this session in jackboot fashion, simply to put forward and perpetuate its vision of what the country would be without giving any explanation, without giving us so much as a modicum of understanding of its agenda, its direction, its purposes and what benefits there would be to Canadians one and all, to what benefits there might exist to each and every one of us, for each and every one of us to be member citizens of this great state. I dare say “great state” still because at least we have a loyal opposition that tries to penetrate at the depths of whatever legislation is being promulgated despite the wishes of all Canadians in order that we might at least see the directions in which we are being led whether we approve or no.

Government Orders

I say that was only until a few moments ago, until finally we heard a member of the government side. I am not sure whether he was motivated by a desire to ensure that the truth do speak and speak out loudly and forcibly when he did say, and being singular and unique amongst all the members of his caucus, that the reason we are presenting this legislation is, to be brutally frank, to ensure that those who do not require assistance no longer have it, that we no longer operate on the premise that if there are benefits that accrue to individuals who become citizens, native born or naturalized in this country, that we are no longer entitled to those benefits if we do not pass at the very first instance a means test that is defined arbitrarily, whimsically, appropriately as the government says and periodically as its whim would apply as the occasion demands and as the necessities of economics dictate.

Would that the government had had the courage to say so at the very beginning so that all Canadians would have known that the agenda of this government, that the vision of this government for Canada would be predicated on a series of principles and directions that excluded Canadians from benefiting from their input in the development and promulgation of programs beneficial to this state.

So what have we? We had utter silence over the course of the last couple of days on this debate by members on the government side until this one member decided that the truth could no longer be withheld and that he had to join in the chorus of the member for Mississauga South who did say, and I think I quote him correctly, that universality is much too expensive a principle upon which Canadians can build a society of free and secure individuals. It is much too expensive, says he. He is in agreement, of course, with the Minister of Finance who says that we must clawback whatever benefits have accrued to citizens who have contributed by dint of their efforts, by their contributions in either a pension plan or, in this other case, through family involvement in nurturing a family environment that has been the steadfast base upon which our society has been built.

So what are Canadians to think? What are they to say when before this House the Minister of Finance, in response to penetrating questions that ask for a rationale, some sort of indication as to what reason there might be for us to tax discriminately, pejoratively and with great prejudice, Canadians on the basis of age or family affiliation? What is his response? In a very