

Supply

I should like to share with the House two insights by way of posing a question. The first criticism I heard was a question posed by the Hon. Member. They are asking questions about the security of the OAS from the Oppositor. In his speech the Hon. Member—and I would like him to correct it, if he can—gave the impression that we are abolishing the OAS. We are not abolishing the OAS. We have made this absolutely clear. In fact, inflation indexation is there after the 3 per cent on the OAS, and the GIS is fully indexed. My constituents are simply asking for facts, and they are being unreasonably frightened by the kinds of scare tactics and the rhetoric of the Hon. Member.

● (1130)

Their second concern is that they want to know what we are doing about inflation. The Hon. Member opposite speaks not at all about inflation. The greatest damage done to the senior people in this country was done between 1980 and 1984 with interest rates at 22 per cent and with inflation through the roof. Seniors could not cope with it. This Government is trying to come to terms with inflation and seniors are willing to make a contribution too. Seniors with the lowest income, of course, should not be expected to, but others, I am told, feel that they want to make their contribution. What does the Hon. Member say about inflation? How does one come to terms with inflation? If, in fact, one comes to terms with inflation, is that not the greatest contribution we can make to the incomes of seniors?

The third question I would ask has to do with the Hon. Member's comments on polls. He said this Government is dictated by polls.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) on a point of order.

Mr. Deans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hesitate to interrupt the Hon. Member but the 10-minute period for comments and questions is intended to be shared. It is not intended that Members should utilize the entire 10 minutes to make a speech. I can well appreciate that he might have questions or want to make comments, and that is quite within the rules, but there are other people, I am sure, who might also want to ask questions or to make comments on the speech of the Hon. Member who has spoken on behalf of the Liberal Party.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, that you ask the Hon. Member if he could resume his seat and allow the Hon. Member to answer and allow other Members to take their turn, if they so desire.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The representations made by the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) are, of course, well taken. We have a 10-minute question and comment period, and the Hon. Member for London West (Mr. Hockin) was nearing approximately three minutes. I ask him to conclude his comments so that we may proceed with other Members who may wish to participate.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I have only put questions, I have not made a speech. The final question has to do with polls.

There is no poll that has ever asked the Canadian people whether they wanted to deindex the first 3 per cent of OAS. That has never been in the minds of any polling organization, much less a political Party, and to claim that that has been a part of any Government's polling apparatus is questionable. I ask the Hon. Member to answer these three questions, primarily to answer the question about inflation.

Mr. Tobin: Be it ever so humble, Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief in making this comment. When the Hon. Member is here a little bit longer he will understand something, that on very rare occasions in the life of a Parliament there are days when the walls of partisanship disappear from this place. There are days when a special mood prevails in this place, when the importance of the issue at hand is not one that is subject to the cut and thrust of partisan debate. I say to the Hon. Member that he has missed an opportunity with the kind of comments he has just made to participate in that kind of very special mood, that kind of very special non-partisan debate.

I did not refer to polls. Inflation is less than 4 per cent. The issue is not whether or not you are fast on your feet or whether or not I can get up and be terribly partisan in my response, of which I assure you I am quite capable. The issue is whether or not we can isolate today and understand in human terms the nature and the effect of this budget measure on our senior citizens and whether we, as Members of Parliament, today are prepared to express ourselves to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Finance and urge them to do quickly what we know they are going to do ultimately anyway, and not in the process destroy the concept of universality.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Hon. Member for his passionate plea that we really do look at what this measure is doing for senior citizens and for his desire that we set aside some of our partisan rhetoric on this issue. I commend the Hon. Member for that attempt.

I wonder if I could not ask the Hon. Member then, in view of that request that he has made of all of us, whether I could not also request him, to be fair and to be accurate and honest in what he is saying.

For example, early in his comments when he was referring to Mr. Fisher and his comments last night on *The Journal* he used the words, "The cut to OAS payments". I think we should state it correctly. It is not a cut to any OAS payments as they are today. What it is, is a proposal to limit the increase past 3 per cent. So I appeal to the Hon. Member, would he please be accurate and would he be fair?

I would also like to ask the Hon. Member, who I think was here when the six and five program was introduced, and I am sure he supported it, what was inflation at that time when the payments were reduced to six and five? Would he please indicate that? What is inflation today? Would the Hon. Member then please tell us, by how much did that measure then in the six and five program reduce the increase in the payments compared to how much this one will reduce the payments of OAS? I appeal to him to be fair so that the seniors who are watching this debate today will say, "Here is a