

*The Budget*

**Mr. Rodriguez:** He did. He put on leeches; he bled the patient.

I mentioned the fact that there is something else about the budget that really bothers me a great deal. It is maybe the second incursion into destroying the principle of universality of social programs. I have always taken the position that the universal principle means that it does not matter whether one is in the upper income levels or the bottom income levels. The universality of a social program covering all Canadians really binds us together in a commitment to the program so that no government can separate those who have little income from those who have a lot of income. The means test is the thin edge of the wedge that separates people; it does not bind them together.

• (1320)

I have always seen every attempt to destroy universality as not binding Canadians together but rather separating them. The principle on which this country was built was not this atavistic, selfish attitude that I have seen in other jurisdictions, where everybody is for himself or herself, and the devil takes the hindmost.

We built the country based on the principle of co-operation, that in fact I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper. That is the principle on which we built the country: the co-op movements, co-op housing, the caisses populaires, the credit unions, the principle of people working together for the common good. This is not some wishy-washy Marxist idea that deprives people of personal initiative. It recognizes and it challenges us to work together to build a social program, to build a community, to build a society. That is what it is all about.

To run out there and use this very simplistic slogan of why should bank presidents get family allowance or get old age pension is not the issue. The principle is there. The issue is: If we think he should not be getting it then maybe we had better look at the way we tax them and maybe we ought to look at the kinds of things we have been saying in this party for years about fair taxation. Maybe we ought not to let them enjoy the perks of being the president of Inco or the president of a bank by writing off their box tickets at the Blue Jay games against their business expenses. Maybe we ought to take a good hard look at that.

These are the kinds of things we have been saying. I am concerned that in this prescription they have inserted

something that will make the condition even worse down the road. What will be next? Is the next one medicare? After all, we could make exactly the same arguments about family allowances and old age pensions. We could make exactly the same arguments on the medicare issue.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Do you remember the sacred trust, John?

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Oh, I remember it well. I remember the sacred trust. But that is why they are at 11 per cent now, brothers. This prescription I have said is an 8 per cent prescription. Some Tory asked me: "Does that mean we will go up 8 per cent?" I said: "No, brothers, you will go down to 8 per cent".

If we looked at the diagnosis, we need to let Canadians keep more of the money they earn. I hear them all the time saying: "We have to get the consumer out into the marketplace".

**Mr. Nunziata:** With what?

**Mr. Rodriguez:** With what, exactly. That is why he is going across the border. He thinks he is getting a better deal. He is getting more bang for the buck he is spending. That is why the rate of savings for Canadians is not as high as it has been in the past. Governments have been taking money out of their pockets at every turn. Remember, it is not just this government that is taking money from them. The provincial governments, the municipal governments and the school boards are all taking money. There is only one taxpayer.

Yes, a New Democrat is telling you that, brother. There is only one patient. He has only one artery. He has only one heart. When we start bleeding him and, as my friend said, putting the leeches on him we are only exacerbating the weakness of his body, sapping the strength from his body.

**An hon. member:** Rigor mortis is imminent.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** We say: "Why not? What an opportunity to give a boost to the economy". The diagnosis recognizes that in fact the patient needs some resuscitation and needs to keep more of the money he earns. In this valley of tears when people are losing their jobs and industries are going, is it not an amazing fact that the only people making money are the bankruptcy trustees? One bankruptcy trustee said: "I've got so much business I don't know where I'm going to get the help to do it".