

of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) when I heard her speak yesterday.

That is the tragedy of all this. We speak of what we have done about redistributing income in Canada. From 1968 to 1978 the budget in Canada has grown from \$10 billion to almost \$50 billion, and yet the proportion of Canadian families below the poverty line is just about the same as it was in 1968. We have not succeeded in redistributing income successfully at all. Perhaps it is because we have concentrated so much on redistribution and not on developing the economic pie upon which redistribution could be based and on which a change in it could be based.

That is why I feel sorry about the situation our country is in today. I do not pretend to be any more compassionate than any other member of this House, nor do I take second place to any other member. But I wonder when the day is going to come when we are going to be asked to support proper social programs, and when we will have a government which has a real commitment to restraint and to prioritizing in terms of where our country is going, so that we will not waste as we have, so that we will not dissipate the riches we have, so that we can give our children and our children's children some opportunities, so that we can do something about unemployment which now stands so high and so that we can do something for senior citizens who, when they speak to me about the benefits of this bill, as good as they are, say, "Mr. Baker, that still does not get me out of the problem in which I find myself". They tell me that they are worried about their future and still feel insecure.

We support this bill. The minister tried to say that I was insecure about my future. That is not in my hands. I am talking about the senior citizens who have spoken to me. They still say that, as commendable as these steps are—I commend the minister for taking these steps, and this party intends to support the bill and allow it to go to committee today—the government ought not to break its arm patting itself on the back. It has our support with respect to every worth while program. It has the support of all sides of the House. We just wish that in terms of the management of the business of the country the government would give us an equal dose of common sense. The Canadian people are sick and tired of waste and of seeing large tax increases month after month and then finding themselves further and further behind. When we put this bill through today, perhaps the government will bend its efforts to get to the root of many other problems. We will support appropriate social programs in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): May I point out to hon. members that if I recognize the Minister of National Health and Welfare at this point, she will close the debate. The hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie).

[*English*]

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Speaker, could I say—

Old Age Security Act

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council on a point of order.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, you thought the minister was about to rise and because of that you pointed out that in so doing she would close the debate. The hon. member on my left was trying to be recognized at the same time, and I believe you did not see him inadvertently. According to tradition, hon. members are allowed to rise alternately, and one hon. member was trying to be recognized who should have been allowed to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): That is precisely what happened. While warning the minister, I noticed the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie). But I believe I had been given the name of the hon. member for York East (Mr. Collette).

[*English*]

Mr. D. M. Collette (Parliamentary Secretary to Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry there was confusion this afternoon regarding this bill, and I am sorry that the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) went on for so long and denied hon. members on this side of an opportunity to reply. The hon. member was well within his time, but he showed the type of advantage which is taken.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That is not fair.

Mr. Collette: Hon. members are certainly not gentlemanly in that respect.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I shortened my remarks, but let me just say, so that my friends will feel much better, that we on this side are prepared to extend the hours of this House, if the government is agreeable, in order that the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) and any other member can speak, on the assumption that this bill will go to committee today.

Mr. Collette: Mr. Speaker, I have never seen the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton as unctuous as he was today, and it is certainly a sight to behold.

I strongly support this bill and, had I the time, I would have liked to go on at length and talk about the reasons why I am a great supporter of the universality of the old age pension program. I would have liked to talk about my experiences while growing up in Great Britain after the war when many millions of people were left alone and destitute. Many lost children and other relatives in the war, and the protection afforded by the state through the old age pension program was one means whereby people could maintain their dignity and their standard of living. I base my remarks on a great philosophical tradition in terms of support of old age pensions. One