

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

Well, Madam Speaker, when those words were spoken, the idea that anyone would return to a handout system for the seniors who have earned the right to a secure old age was unthinkable. With this government, it is clear that nothing is unthinkable.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister has excused this smashing of a sacred trust, his betrayal, his word to Canadians, by saying, "We want to do more for lower income seniors". I will tell this House what is happening to low-income seniors. At doors throughout Ottawa West during the election campaign just a year ago, I spoke to low income seniors who have never paid income tax before and who are now being gouged by this government. They and other low income Canadians are now paying 60 per cent more in income tax than when this government took office.

This government is taking from middle income Canadians and it is also taking from the poor. It is ensuring with this bill that more and more seniors every year will lose their pensions. The seniors of Canada have paid for these pensions every year since 1951, nearly 40 years. They have planned their retirement, trusting their government to return to them what they paid for.

Because these seniors lived through the depression, because they were wise enough to invest, because they were frugal enough to establish pensions for themselves, because they chose to do without many of the comforts of life to enjoy a comfortable and secure retirement, they are now being punished by this government for living by all the good conservative, frugal principles that this government espouses but refuses to govern by.

[*Translation*]

How can the Members on the other side of the House stand up and in all good conscience justify this betrayal? The government claims it is necessary to extort money from seniors to solve the deficit problem. Well, who has created this problem? Let me do a sample overview of this government's record since 1984. It has enjoyed better economic conditions, lower inflation, lower interest rates and higher employment than had been seen in the five years previous to its taking office when the economy of the entire world was in turmoil.

[*English*]

Despite those favourable conditions, despite increased taxes, despite more working taxpayers among whom it could spread the costs of running the country, it has doubled the national debt and doubled the amount of money that goes to pay interest on the debt. No wonder it hasn't been able to reduce the annual deficit.

The government has increased taxes most severely on low and middle-income Canadians, while continuing to talk about fairness in tax. It has increased what it extracts from individual Canadians from \$29 billion to \$50 billion in less than five years. It has cut programs for environmental solutions, cut programs to reduce demands on non-renewable energy and to research alternative energy sources, cut services to Canadians by cutting 12,000 jobs across Canada in the Public Service, cut help to unemployed Canadians, cut help to the most disadvantaged regions of Canada, destroyed our national rail system, sold our national airline, and reneged on its commitment to the provinces to share the cost of social programs and education.

[*Translation*]

What I want to know from the members opposite, Madam Speaker, is just what this government has been doing? Just what has this government been spending taxpayers' money on?

[*English*]

The government pretends it is moving toward a fairer tax system. What is fair about taxing only seniors at 100 per cent, only children's allowances at 100 per cent? How does the government justify 100 per cent taxes for seniors and for children, when overnight windfall profits are not taxed at anywhere near that rate, when millionaires can make a profit on their investment and pay no more than 29 per cent, when the most profitable corporations in Canada have had their tax rate reduced from 36 per cent to 28 per cent?

Seniors invested too, but they invested with their government. Beginning in 1951, they paid extra taxes specifically to provide for their old age. They continue to contribute. They have a right to keep that for which they paid.