

Senate and House of Commons Act

cut our salaries to the poverty level. Then we can say we are leading by example. We can say we are concerned about the 1.5 million young people in families with incomes below the poverty level. Canadians will then appreciate that the Government is leading by example. Yet, for whatever reason, the Government decides to cut our salaries by \$1,000. It does not have the guts to cut salaries to the poverty level.

Mr. McDermid: What about your Leader? He took a nice cut.

Mr. Nunziata: The salary of Members of Parliament and Senators is not the issue. What is at issue is the fairness, equity and justice of the policies advocated and implemented by the Government of Canada. If it was truly concerned about the plight of the downtrodden and disadvantaged it would not have brought in two regressive Budgets which amount to a massive frontal assault on the poor. The Government deindexed family allowances and tried to deindex pensions. If it were truly concerned about the disadvantaged then it would declare war on poverty. Let it bring in measures to assist the poor rather than assisting its rich brothers and sisters on Bay Street, the richest businessmen in Canada.

Mr. Della Noce: Where is your Leader from? Bay Street?

Mr. Nunziata: If the Government was able to find the means to assist the oil industry in western Canada and find \$1 billion for failed banks, or billions of dollars to help business in Canada, it can find the resources to assist the poor.

The Government, by its actions, has led Canadians to question seriously its credibility and integrity. If it were truly concerned about waste in Government, why would the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and his Government support the relocation of a prison to the Prime Minister's riding? That decision is a classic example of crass porkbarrel politics at its worse. Some \$41 million has been absolutely frittered away because the Prime Minister wanted to play sugar daddy to his constituents. How far could that money have gone to assist the poor? It would have gone a long way to help the thousands and thousands of Canadians who suffer the indignity of standing in line at food banks in every major city in Canada. It is a national tragedy that our fellow Canadians have to stand in line for food.

Mr. McDermid: When did the food banks start?

Mr. Rodriguez: They did not start yesterday.

Mr. McDermid: That is for sure.

Mr. Nunziata: Yet the Prime Minister decides to waste \$41 million of taxpayers' money while his Government, through his wife, takes particular pride in opening food banks. It is the goal of the Liberal Party of Canada to close every last damn food bank in the country. The fact that these food banks have spread out over the country suggests a very serious problem in our social welfare system.

Mr. McDermid: When did they start?

Mr. Nunziata: Instead of building prisons in the Prime Minister's riding, instead of padding his office with Tory hacks and flacks and bagmen, instead of hiring Dalton Camp at over \$100,000 a year, instead of wasting money on Challenger jets to follow the Prime Minister around, the Government should be directing the money toward the needy.

I have attempted to point out the hypocrisy of this legislation. Of course, it will carry. It may result in a one-paragraph story in major newspapers, but Canadians will see through it, see it as a facade. They will recognize the hypocrisy in this move. I believe very strongly that they will reflect their opinion at the ballot boxes in the next election. It is very obvious, if one reviews the public opinion polls over the last two years, that the Conservative Government has lost the trust and faith of the people of Canada. The voters gave the Government an opportunity in September of 1984 to govern. Members opposite have done one hell of a lousy job and Canadians know that now. Is it any wonder the Conservatives are tied with the NDP for last place in popular support?

In closing, may I indicate that Members on this side of the House intend to support the legislation. It is hypocritical legislation but, nonetheless, if the Government wants to play its petty little games, we will respond accordingly. However, it is regrettable that the NDP wants to cut off debate. I have considerable respect for the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). I think he works hard. I ask him to reconsider the position he has taken. I know that if he looks in the mirror and rereads *Hansard* he will understand the hypocrisy behind the motion he has presented. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say a few words, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McDermid: How can you say that with a straight face?

Mr. Rodriguez: It's easy when you do not have a straight face.

• (1250)

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata). Can he tell us which Prime Minister in the history of Canada has proposed and taken a 15 per cent pay cut? Which Cabinet in the history of Canada took a 10 per cent pay cut? Which House in the history of Canada has reduced its salary by \$1,000? Did the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) accept the 10 per cent pay cut equivalent to that which the Cabinet took? If not, why not?

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can ask the Hon. Member a question or two.

Some Hon. Members: No, no!

Some Hon. Members: Answer, answer.

Mr. Nunziata: I do not ask for answers, Mr. Speaker. I know it is not appropriate for me to ask questions of the