

Old Age Security Act (No. 2)

citizens. This Bill abrogates a responsibility to those seniors who have an unwritten contract, as the Minister herself stated. The only factor in the whole pension scheme, in my view, which bears scrutiny is the universality aspect relating to the top echelon of the income scale.

What are the savings in this Bill? Perhaps some \$30 million. I would like to take a minute to examine some of the waste of this Government and put it in perspective with regard to what it is willing to do to the seniors in the name of saving. How much did we waste in Haiti to pay left-wing dictatorships and their lackeys? Some \$25 million. How much did we waste on the Unity Office? Perhaps \$50 million. Then there was the advertising of the Constitution; loans to left-wing nations. Michael Manley got a \$90-million loan, \$10 million of it forgivable. Will we ever recover it? What about loans to left-wing nations at no interest or very little interest over terms of 20 to 50 years in the amount of hundreds of millions of dollars?

On the metric office, it spent perhaps \$25 million. We have losing Crown corporations, dozens of them. According to the Auditor General's Report, most of them are absolutely and totally unaudited, operating on their own under the cloak of Government. Canadair alone owes this Government \$1.5 billion. What is the tab for enforced bilingualism? It is \$441 million. Their answer is to penalize the senior citizens of this great Canada of ours.

To invoke closure of debate on this Bill is to say to Members of this House and to their constituents that the Government has no interest in or regard for the opinions and needs of others. By invoking closure the Government is saying to us, to all Canadians, that what we want and what we feel is necessary in our lives is of no importance whatsoever.

By invoking closure the Government is saying: "We will decide what is best for you. We will make these important decisions for you. We are not interested in what you think, even if we waste millions of dollars on programs which are distasteful"—ones which my constituents do not want. By invoking closure, the Government is once again replacing democracy with dictatorship, a situation which I have spoken about in this House before and a situation which I regard with anger and distaste. I submit my outrage is justified, as is that of many Canadians who support that position.

Prior to this particular invocation of closure, there have been 14 times during this session of Parliament when this Government limited debate on issues before this House. As my colleague just mentioned, thank Heaven when it is over. On 12 occasions the Government has imposed time allocation, which we are now under, which is just a fancy word for closure; and on two others it resorted to outright closure in its true meaning. These were 14 actual instances when the Government was successful in imposing its dictatorial will.

There were other times when the Government attempted to invoke closure and was blocked, most recently when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) sought to whisk his controversial and disastrous Canagrex Bill through the House. The Hon. Member to my right presented a petition on behalf of his constituents only yesterday decrying this injustice. What

will Canagrex do? It will give the Government the power to buy and sell all agricultural products in Canada. The word for that, which I learned in my reading of Marx, is communization. It will cost more millions with another Crown corporation in place.

By invoking closure, the Government quite clearly reveals its lack of regard and respect for the Members of this House and, I repeat, for the people we represent, particularly our seniors. I might add briefly that this disrespect and disregard is further amplified by the Government's use of Orders in Council. This Government, much to its dismay, must present certain items of legislation to Parliament for examination, scrutiny and debate. That is our role on this side of the House, for the time being.

This Government, much to its dismay again, obviously finds the process of scrutiny distasteful. To have its destructive policies and its shallow reasoning subject to public scrutiny is an obvious irritant to this Government. It is much more simple and less embarrassing for this Government to pass Orders in Council whenever possible. How simple and, as I stated at the beginning, how arrogant! This arrogance is supported by fact. Since this Government was returned to office in 1980, it has passed a total of 11,345 Orders in Council, some 4,062 in 1982 alone.

What has been created by this by-passing of Parliament? A total loss of credibility, a total loss of confidence, people not knowing whether they can trust their banks or trust companies; and now contracts with senior citizens are broken. What it amounts to is a pox on the house of our senior citizens, particularly older women, many of whom have been on the low-wage scale all their lives or have received no wages whatsoever. We all know what the Minister of State for Mines (Mrs. Erola) thinks of the spousal allowance and women volunteers. As my colleague who spoke before me mentioned, women have a great role to play in the voluntary sector of the country, particularly senior citizens.

Let us look at this Order in Council nonsense. There is VIA Rail, the beginning of the end of passenger rail service in this country. How many senior citizens wrote to me about the cancellation of the commuter train in the riding of Simcoe South? Literally dozens. It was their only mode of transportation to and from the city of Toronto.

The emergency planning order, arbitrary and far-reaching powers for a Government in a nebulous or manufactured emergency, included provisions, if anyone in this country could believe it, for the creation of civilian internment camps. I hope that right-wing senior citizens are not the first on the list.

There has been an increase in the cost of our postal service, another item that is very inflationary. It causes the seniors undue hardship. There has been no regard for a corresponding improvement in the postal service. There has been the imposition of mandatory metric weights and measures, costly and controversial to say the least. I am proud to join 36 other Members on this side of the House in the opening of a service station to give people that freedom of choice. The issue is not metric; the issue is freedom of choice. The issue is no Orders in Council.