

Government Orders

The Finance Minister's budget abolishes universality of old age pensions—. But that is precisely what the government solemnly promised not to do before the last election. Prime Minister Mulroney said that if the Conservatives did anything to old age pensions they would improve them.

I personally do not believe that the rationale behind the tax grab is sound. I do not think that the national debt versus the tax grab of OAS payments make sense.

But the fact that the people of Canada have seen that the Government of Canada has discriminated against people of 65 years of age is a significant point which they will remember—

This next correspondence from D'Ornellas reads:

Seniors of Canada expect that the integrity of the PM should be beyond reproach—.the PM promised that any government he led would improve pensions rather than downgrading them.

There are other vehicles government could utilize in meetings its objectives for reducing the national deficit instead of the unethical and illegal proposal to progressively increase the bite on seniors on fixed income.

The next letter is from M. Messel who writes:

We seniors are being asked, basically on a fixed income, to curb our standard of living so that the present government can have more money to spend, in my opinion much of it carelessly. Have the "members of Parliament" made any sacrifices personally to help the Canadian debt situation—if so what?

The next letter is from R. Paskell who says:

I must protest the proposed budget provision for the taxing of old age security pensions—

It is intolerable that this lack of trust now pervades both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. Mr. Wilson has the nerve to maintain that this budget proposal maintains universality. How stupid does the minister think the electorate is?

—taxpayers have paid their premiums and if this were a private plan there would be no question of full entitlement regardless of other income.

This next letter was written by C. Monette to the Minister of State for Seniors and copied to me. It reads:

I am a chartered accountant, worked hard to earn a middle class income, contributed my services during my working years in the community and for my church, and gave as generously to charity as I could. I paid the old age tax from its inception.

The clawback gives the lie to election promises, and breaks faith with those of us who built this country after our services in the Armed Forces. —this is our reward for 45 years of service to the Crown and to the country!

Do you realize that we still must pay the old age security tax included in general taxes, plus showing the old age pension as taxable income—

If taxes must be raised, adjust the tax rates progressively against income, not against classes of people.

The next letter is from Mr. F. Reynolds:

We seniors paid for the right to have the old age pension at age 65 through our taxes in past years. I feel that just because many of us have through the years denied ourselves of some luxuries to provide a comfortable income in our old age, we should not be penalized for this. Had we spent frivolously and at age 65 had only our old age pension to live on, we would be entitled to the "Supplement". Under Mr. Wilson's proposed "clawback" we are going to suffer for being careful during our working years.

• (1050)

Mr. G. Tessier writes:

Why does the Government of Canada discriminate against seniors on OAS and on family allowances—

Under the Charter of Rights are we not guaranteed equal treatment? Since Canadian seniors and families making more than \$50,000 a year are not the only Canadians to have contributed to the national debt, why should they be penalized?

A letter from P.R. Webb reads:

As one affected, I urge you to oppose the OAS clawback.

We've got to get rid of the right wing group manipulated by big business who are in the process of destroying Canada. I'm strongly tempted to pull out and join my daughter in Los Angeles!

Mr. McDermid: Oh yeah? Then see what her heart bypass costs her.

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. and Mrs. Woodward write:

We are writing to express our objections to the clawback of the Old Age Pension—

Many seniors have declining health and must pay large amounts of money for additional help and transportation and to pay for expensive medication. Not all provinces give financial help with these.

Surely someone who has worked a lifetime and paid taxes all those years is entitled to what he has accumulated to use for his own living purposes. His planning for retirement has included the OAP which he had a complete right to expect to receive. This attempt at clawback is a breach of contract to be compared to a life insurance company's failure to honour the terms of annuity.

This next letter is a from Mr. and Mrs. Larocque who write:

My husband and I would like to add our names to the growing list of pensioners who are protesting the government's cutback—