

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

is the Government's representative—that at this time, with current economic conditions, we need new direction. We need direction even if it means that there will be a higher deficit in the country. We have to re-focus our attention on income capability and job creation. We have to look at the economy. Six and five applied to Public Service pensioners, any other pensioners or to family incomes is not the answer to creating purchasing power in this country.

• (1125)

We said this at the beginning and we continue to say it: the legislation should be withdrawn. Bills C-133, C-132 and C-131 should be taken back to the drawing board, looked at and scrapped. A new program for stimulation should be brought forward by this Government, one that will increase employment and give people income capacity. That is what this Government should bring forward.

We say to the Government it is not too late. It does not have to go on with this ridiculous proposal it has placed before the House of Commons; there is no reason for it. It is outdated. If it ever had a time, that time has passed.

We ask the Government to reconsider this Bill seriously. If it is not yet satisfied that the program now before us does not have the support of the majority of Canadians, it should send these Bills back to committee. Let the committee travel across the country. Divide it into panels and let the committee hear the views of those most affected. Let it hear them in Vancouver, St. John's, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City and every other community across the country. Let us find out and do what the public wants for a change. I say to the Government, take the Bills out of the Order Paper, put them back in the committee and send the committee out to the people. I am positive as I stand here that the committee would come back and recommend that these pieces of legislation not be proceeded with.

Equally important, there is a serious question about the legality of one of the pieces of legislation now being implemented. I ask the Government to make a reference to a Supreme Court judge and ask for a judgment on it. Let us find out who is right. The Government back room manipulators say it is legal; lawyers on the other side say it is not. Surely in those circumstances the Government ought to recognize its responsibility, take the right course of action and ask for a legal opinion.

Should the Government decide, in its misguided judgment, to proceed with the legislation, for heaven's sake do not make it retroactive. If the Government decides it has to go ahead, for God's sake do not impose it retroactively.

Finally, I say to the Government to make use of the time. To further harass and reduce the income capacity of those at the bottom end of the scale is outrageous. To push ahead with it now is ridiculous. It is inhuman; it will create great hardship. Let us address the real problems in this country. Come forward with some proposals for economic recovery, job creation and other proposals that will put this country back on the road to success.

Do not push ahead with the legislative program now before us. For heaven's sake, stop and think about it, those of you who are here on the Government benches. The Tories have come grudgingly to the view that what they once supported is no longer supportable. I say to the Liberals, for God's sake think of what you are doing. Consider the impact on those who have now retired, whether they be public service retirees or retirees who worked in other parts of the economy.

Consider this. These people are not being denied some income for a year or two; they are being asked to reduce their income for the rest of their lives. For heaven's sake, it is not necessary. It is wrong-headed, economically stupid and defies all logic. It flies in the face of the Government's own advisers' advice. It pays no recognition to what the spiritual leaders of this country are advising. It does not even recognize what the banks' senior administrative officers are now saying ought to be done. Those are your supporters, for heaven's sake. Listen to those senior corporate people, if you cannot listen to us. If the Government thinks that the Tories cannot be trusted because it does not know where they stand, although I agree, I say, listen to them on this occasion and for heaven's sake withdraw the legislation.

• (1130)

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-133 knowing full well, as others do, that the Government moved yesterday to close off debate on this very important piece of legislation. It did this knowing full well that many Hon. Members in this House still wish to address the provisions of Bill C-133. It knows there is growing opposition to the measures contained in this Bill across the country, not only from the trade union movement but from a growing number of concerned citizens. In fact, if the Government were to listen at all to the media attention which has been paid to this Bill, not only on the commentary pages but on the editorial pages right across this country, it would recognize that the support it believes it has for this piece of legislation is dissipating very quickly. I believe that is probably why the Government is moving to shut up debate in this House on this very important piece of legislation.

In the course of this debate, Mr. Speaker, Members in my Party have been extremely critical of the position which the Conservative Party took in supporting Bill C-124 at the beginning of August, as my colleague from Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) just mentioned. I believe we have been absolutely right in levelling that criticism. I know that many Members of the Conservative Party do not like to hear us make that criticism; nonetheless, I believe it to be quite accurate and quite true. In fact, many Members of the Conservative Party have spoken to me since then and said if they had known what the Government was really doing under the six and five program, they would never have voted for that piece of legislation in the first place. And I am quite sure that many of them regret their support of the Government for the six and five program.