

Old Age Security Act (No. 2)

but indeed the application of a principle aimed at capping indexation in all sectors at 6 per cent the first year and 5 per cent the second year. But the Minister, the Cabinet and the Government have protected the elderly. Those who benefit from income security will not be affected; therefore, all such elderly people will receive their full pension with no change in the indexation. Spouses as well will benefit from it, Mr. Speaker. If they figure on the list of income security recipients, they will not be affected in any way whatsoever. Members opposite are somehow on a witch hunt if they expect the people to believe that, but they will not succeed. All one needs to do is to meet with senior citizens, as I have done recently. As the Opposition claims, those people were under the impression that they would lose part of their pension and that they would be driven right out of their homes. That statement has been made in the course of the debate, Mr. Speaker. Let us call a spade a spade. I read in yesterday's *Hansard* that the Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) had said that a number of Members had spoken to the Bill, but that in committee, and I am quoting from page 22342:

—we had only four sessions to hear witnesses. Every single witness and every group and organization appearing before us, crowded into those four sessions, violently and strenuously opposed the measures in the Bill.

The Hon. Member is implying that the committee did not sit long enough. In fact, I was responsible for chairing all sessions held by the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs. When Members so requested, the Minister was always available and always attended Committee sessions to answer questions put by Members. The reason we had only four sessions is that we had no other witnesses who wanted to appear before the committee and give evidence. Mr. Speaker, the list of witnesses shows that the most concern was shown, not by senior citizens, but by the Opposition, who wanted to play politics, because they even invited members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada to fill the room where one of the Committee sessions was held, and all associations and organizations who, through the Clerk, asked to appear before the Committee, were duly received.

In fact, many times the Clerk had to call witnesses on the telephone to get them to appear before the Committee. So if the Member for Kingston and the Islands says that there was a restriction on the number of witnesses, I can inform the House that that is absolutely not true. All witnesses and associations who wanted to appear before the Committee were duly received, all the time normally available was indeed used, we extended the time during which the Committee was supposed to sit and once, when the Minister was appearing before the Committee one evening, Opposition Members said after a half-hour of debate: We have no further questions. The evidence contained in the issues of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs shows that anyone who wanted to appear before the Committee was admitted, and that included any Members who wished to take part in the debate. However, the same issues always comes up. It was implied that the senior

citizens were being victimized by the six and five program. Hon. Members opposite have never realized that inflation is the worst problem for people on a fixed income and that this is why we want to curb it. If inflation continues to increase at the same rate as in the past, obviously the gap between have and have-not in our society will widen. We only have to look at the Senate report on poverty to realize to what extent some people become the victims of inflation, and these people are always those on fixed incomes. This is why the Government is attacking this cancer in our economy, namely inflation, and we are now witnessing a reduction in the inflation rate. The gap caused by inflation is closing up.

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens know who is responsible for our pension scheme in Canada. They know that it is the Liberal Government and the Liberal philosophy. The New Democrats spoke about it, but the Liberals acted. Mr. Speaker, you come from a very beautiful area and you certainly have often seen ships going by and gulls flying over them. The gulls think of themselves as captains of the ships, but they simply fly over them and leave their visiting card as they pass. But the captain is the master on board. While the New Democrats talk about pensions, the Liberals act, they pass legislation and for 25 years now have been providing pensions to senior citizens and widows who need them, by amending the Old Age Security Act.

Mr. Keeper: You are cutting down pensions!

Mr. Roy: Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is important for these people to feel secure. We have to consider how far-ranging this debate has become.

The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands asked the Director General of Planning, Evaluation and Liaison, Mr. Allen, the following question: "What would be the cost during the first month, that is January, for the people affected? I am not speaking about those who receive the income supplement as they will not be affected. I am not speaking about spouses whose income is guaranteed as they will not be affected. I am speaking about those who receive only the basic pension; by what amount will their January cheques be cut?" This was the reply given by Mr. Allen to the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands: "Let me qualify my answer. We are projecting a reduction of about 50c. per pensioner in January 1983, that is 50c. for each pensioner who has a sufficient income and does not receive any supplement." I repeat that the figure quoted was 50c. per pensioner in January, but the Opposition has amplified this throughout the debate and has even suggested that some senior citizens will lose their homes.

Mr. Speaker, this shows to what extent the Opposition is willing to play politics on the backs of senior citizens, but we only have to meet with these people to realize how much confidence they have in the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), who with the continuing support of