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**Mrs. Michelle Simson (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of the House to Bill S-216, which is currently in the Senate and must be passed by Christmas in order to prevent 400 sick, disabled and dying Canadians from having their long-term disability benefits cut off.

Josée Marin, a former Nortel employee who will lose all her benefits, says, “the passage of Bill S-216 will mean the difference between living in my home and dying in my car”.

The [Prime Minister](#) had the power to appoint 32 senators with full benefits and a pension for life. He also has the power to fast track the bill through the Senate and protect the benefits of hundreds of Canadians.

Will the [Prime Minister](#) use this power and fast track this bill to protect Canadian pensioners, or will he sit on his hands and force Canadians like Josée to fend for themselves?

We only have until Christmas. Let us get this done.

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## **Disability Benefits**

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**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I met with Joséé, Sue, Peter, Patrick and about 40 other disabled individuals on long-term disability.

They were here to tell their stories, to tell us that they will face homelessness if the government fails to pass Bill [S-216](#) by Christmas. These are hard-working and proud Canadians who need and deserve our help.

The [Prime Minister](#) can find time to appoint 32 senators for life with a guaranteed pension. Why is he now using these same senators to block passage of Bill [S-216](#)?

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**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and this House that we are very concerned about any individual in the country who stands to lose his or her benefits as a result of activity in the economic marketplace that is not his or her fault.

**I can assure the hon. member that this is being viewed at the highest levels to ensure that we have a system that works for individual members, that works for businesses that want to continue to operate, that works with the Canadian economy as a whole, and in due course, when we have something to announce, we will announce it.**

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**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, there are only six weeks left, so I hope the Conservatives will hurry up. These people clearly need help today. They are here in Ottawa in wheelchairs and with canes, in tears, begging parliamentarians for help.

For them, December 31 is the end. Their health insurance benefits will no longer be paid as a result of the bankruptcy of Nortel. Bill [S-216](#) is their last hope.

Why is the [Prime Minister](#) not ordering his Conservative-dominated Senate to pass this bill today, before it is too late?

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**[Hon. Tony Clement \(Minister of Industry, CPC\):](#)**

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows, or should know, that if we actually look at the legalities of that particular proposed piece of legislation, it will not help, or cannot help, the very people she seeks to help.

We, on the other hand, are moving to make sure that this issue is dealt with at the highest levels, that we can have a plan that makes sense to the Canadian economy and makes sense for the individuals who are caught in that particular situation.

However, the bill to which she refers will not be of any help to those particular people.

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