

Senator Phillips: Mr. Chairman, I just wish to make one comment after that last reply. I would suggest that the witness become a member of the cabinet. You can now pass on to Senator Martin.

The Chairman: I do not feel your remark is in order, but it is on the record, in any event.

Senator Martin: Senator Grosart suggested today that the comparison of cash benefits in Canada with other countries would have been useful information. I feel this is a good place to put this information on the record. Do you have the maximum benefit figures available for Australia for a single person and for a couple?

Dr. Willard: Mr. Chairman, it is difficult to make international comparisons at any time because they relate to the standard of living and so forth in any given country. The only comparisons which we have at this time are those made by our research division and they used the exchange rates as they now exist. The maximum for a single person in Australia is \$981 compared with the maximum of \$1,800 for OAS-GIS in Canada, and for a married couple the maximum is \$1,854 in Australia compared with our maximum of \$3,420.

Senator Martin: How about Denmark?

Dr. Willard: Again using the exchange rate basis of comparison, for a single individual the figure is \$1,245 and for a couple it is \$1,868. Denmark also has a supplement of \$272.

Senator Martin: And for The Netherlands?

Dr. Willard: For a single person in The Netherlands the amount is \$1,405 and for a married couple it is \$1,992.

Senator Martin: For New Zealand?

Dr. Willard: In New Zealand they have a superannuation in the amount of \$910 for a single person and \$1,665 for a couple. In addition to that there is the old age pension which goes up to \$910 for a single person and \$1,665 for a couple.

Senator Benidickson: Dr. Willard, you use the term "couple", do you mean a married couple both of whom are eligible for pension?

Dr. Willard: Yes, both of whom are pensioners.

Senator Martin: How about Sweden?

Dr. Willard: For a single person in Sweden the amount is \$1,200 and for a couple it is \$1,867. There is a supplementary old age pension as well for employees and the self-employed. In Canada, since we have not included the Canada or Quebec Pension Plan for retired benefits, we could leave that figure out. In the case of Sweden, it is \$1,200 compared to the \$1,800 in Canada for a single person and \$1,867 compared to \$3,420 for a married couple.

Senator Martin: For the United Kingdom?

Dr. Willard: For a single person in the United Kingdom the amount is \$673 with a possible supplementary pension of \$700. For a married couple it is \$1,091 with a supplementary pension of \$1,145.

Senator Martin: And for the United States?

Dr. Willard: The United States is a little easier to compare because our exchange rates are a closer reflection of the relative standards of living. Under their old-age and survival insurance program they have a minimum that provides \$760 for a single person while for a married couple it is \$1,140 and the average payment under that program is \$1,649 for a single person and \$2,428 for a couple.

Senator Martin: These figures are all in Canadian dollars, are they not?

Dr. Willard: Yes.

Senator Martin: You have provided us with the annual cash benefits for the aged in these selected countries. What we are proposing in Canada is \$1,800 OAS-GIS for a single person and \$3,420 OAS-GIS for a couple.

Dr. Willard: That is correct.

Senator Martin: On the basis of these comparative figures, the rates in Canada are higher than in any of these other countries.

Dr. Willard: Yes, using the current exchange rates as a basis.

Senator Martin: If this legislation is passed, single persons as well as couples will be receiving higher amounts in comparison to these other countries.

Dr. Willard: That is correct.

Senator Thompson: There has been a statement in the Senate by Senator Grosart. I would like to ask Dr. Willard if this is correct. Is it true that if the cost of living had been the escalating factor from the time the basic pension was \$75 until now, that that figure of \$90.53 would be the basic pension today?

Dr. Willard: Yes, that is correct, sir.

Senator Thompson: And that would cost the treasury 18 million. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Bergevin: The figure would be \$200 million if they get about \$10 more than they would get in the base. It would cost from \$180 million to \$200 million.

Senator Thompson: I do not want to misquote Senator Grosart.

The Chairman: Does this represent your view, Senator Grosart?

Senator Grosart: It does not represent my view and it does not represent what I said. That is a very simple way of putting it but if you multiply 18 by 12 you will get close to a total figure. The \$18 million is the one-year-cost-of-living increase cost.