

Canada Assistance Plan

pension being provided to the aged that is sufficient to meet the cost of living today. Also, family allowances should be higher so that parents will have the means with which to send their children to school, dress them decently and feed them properly. These are two factors in our society that must be provided for, namely the children and the aged. They are not on the labour market, perhaps some of the aged have the capital necessary to live on, but they are not on the labour market.

A great many of these people fall within the category of having to depend on public assistance. These people have helped us enough in the past. In many cases they have sacrificed their lives for Canada. I would ask hon. members to think of the pioneers who moved west in this country. They sacrificed themselves and their families in order to build for us a better country in which to live. Therefore it is about time we gave them a little thought. We should see that they have the means with which to live properly, and to make things a little easier for them in their old age.

I do not mean we should do what Mr. Lesage did in the province of Quebec. I should like to remind the Liberals what happened in that province. When the federal government gave the last \$10 raise the old age pensioners were receiving \$75 in the province of Quebec. Those who lived at home and those who lived in the old folks homes received this amount. Immediately after the federal government gave this increase, those living in their own homes received the additional \$10, but those living in the old folks homes were deprived of this \$10 because the provincial government took it back. Therefore those living in their own homes received \$85 a month while the other group received \$75. They are all old people and I do not think there should be this type of discrimination.

I am glad that in this measure the minister is providing a home service for our aged people. In many cases all they have left is a wife or husband, and they are living together. About the most inhuman act you could possibly commit would be to take one away from the other, put one spouse in one corner of the province and the other in another. We should remember that they have lived all their lives together and we should not separate them in this way. Marriage is till death do us part, not till the federal or provincial government decides otherwise. There is a great difference.

[Mr. Langlois (Mégantic).]

With the provision to provide these people with certain help in their homes we will be able to make them a little happier in their last days. I believe that one of the greatest things the government could do to make them much more happy would be to raise the pension to \$100 a month for all the old people in this country.

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, on the resolution stage of this bill I spoke at some length and discussed the guaranteed annual income. I noted that there was a certain reaction to my remarks, particularly in the Vancouver papers. In that city a conference on welfare was being held. In one newspaper there appeared an article with the dramatic title, "Don't scuttle aid plan, welfare boss pleads". Then the article says that this man lashed opposition threats to scuttle the plan, unless it included guaranteed minimum incomes for the aged. I do not know whether he was basing his words on my remarks entirely, but if he would re-read the speech that I made I think he would find that there was no intention, expressed or otherwise, to scuttle the Canada Assistance Plan. There was only a regret that the government had failed to act promptly and energetically on the Senate report on aging. The speaker quoted in this article was Reuben Baetz, who has already been referred to in this debate. He said, when speaking of the aged people, that their needs can be adequately met under the Canada Assistance Plan if it is implemented in an enlightened way. Then he said:

Already we have old age security giving the aged \$75 a month and soon the age of eligibility will be reduced to 65. We also have the Canada Pension Plan which will help our future aged.

Under the assistance plan, the unmet needs of the aged will be made up to them on an individual basis—so why do we need a fourth measure like guaranteed incomes?

I do not know how much Mr. Baetz was acting as an official apologist for the Liberal government and how much he was expressing his own opinions on this issue, but it seems to me that in spite of what he says there are still reasons why we could do with a guaranteed annual income, and I will come to them a little later. I lack the confidence of Mr. Baetz when he says that the unmet needs of the aged will be made up to them by the Canada Assistance plan.

I have been interested in the last few days in reading articles such as the one which