

*Income Tax Amendment*

had chosen to oppose the legislation. However, this is not the point I am trying to make. The point is that all the time the government has been protesting that it was not doing this it has in fact been doing it. From the start of the Canada Pension Plan until today we have been assured time and again that the only reason social security numbers were required was related to the Canada Pension Plan. We were told that the numbering would not extend to everybody in Canada but would cover a limited number of people because there would be many people who would not be included in the Canada Pension Plan. We accepted this statement at face value. The Canada Pension Plan came into effect and social security numbers were adopted.

Social security numbers are being used now in connection with other acts parliament has passed and they are being extended to cover the whole field. Following the adoption of the Canada Pension Plan other acts were passed. The most recent was the bill covering the old age pension supplement. Under the Canada Pension Plan everyone who was employed in Canada was covered by a social security number. The self-employed earning over \$800 per year, being the majority of Canadians, were also included. However, there was still a group of people who were not included. Recently the old age supplement was brought into existence and it included all the elderly from those who had no income whatever right up to those who had an income of \$720. If they draw an old age pension of \$900 a year and have another \$720 from other income they are within the taxable area, so all the elderly are included and there is no one left who will not be registered under a social security number. It is possible, Mr. Speaker, that this is why the \$720 level was selected in the original plan for the old age pension supplement, so that it would provide a group of persons drawing old age pensions who would be eligible for social security numbers?

The present clause 21 in this bill will take in everybody else because it covers every individual who is required to file an income tax return. There will not be anyone left by the time you include those who have an income of not less than \$800 under the Canada Pension Plan and by the time you add those covered by the old age supplement and the medical insurance legislation we have just passed. We will find that everybody in Canada is covered by a social security number. My objection is that the government has sneaked up on us in this matter. I feel that

[Mr. Aiken.]

they have done so by the inclusion of a section in our income tax laws which really covers a fundamental principle in social legislation, and have tucked it away in a bill having to do with the Canadian Vessel Construction Assistance Act. I noted that last night the minister dealt with the other clauses up to clause 19 and then stopped. I do not know if he had any ulterior motive but he never got to clause 21 when he was explaining the provisions of the bill. I do not know whether we were intended to overlook that or what the intention was.

There is a fundamental principle involved here and it is stuck in the middle of a bill making an amendment to the Income Tax Act. This clause should be the subject of a separate vote and the change should have been made three years ago, not in 1967 when the process has been completed. My objection is to the way in which this program has developed. One bill after another has been introduced which included more persons who were subject to public returns and all this time the government has been saying it was not applying this principle to this group or that group. They have by stealth completed the process of implementing a principle on which we should have voted two or three years ago.

• (4:10 p.m.)

The unfortunate part, Mr. Speaker, is that having once established this principle and the numbering system it is very difficult now to stop using it. If the government had been forthright with the house in the first place when these social security numbers were introduced and had said that we were going to use them for purposes of all social legislation from now on, including income tax purposes, then we could have made a stand on the matter at the time and settled the principle. Perhaps the principle would have been adopted, but at least the people would have known what they were supporting and voting for in the election which took place in November, 1965. But this has not happened, Mr. Speaker, and it is why I protest strongly at the present time.

**Mr. Steven Otto (York East):** Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief. I was very interested in what was said by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton). It is a very disturbing thought, as the hon. gentleman put it, that this house is approving a bill which may be