

The Address—Mr. Shaw

Surely the responsible minister of the government will have something to say about the suggestion which came from the leader of this group with respect to the application of selective credit controls.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to refer for a moment to the subject of old age pensions. Call it our welfare program if you like. It is highly significant that after a number of years so many supporters of the government, Liberal members, should now be standing here and urging an increase in the basic pensions payable to our people. That is fine. I sometimes wonder why some of them did not start a long time ago, and I am certain in my own mind that they would not be doing it now if they had not been given a tip-off on certain proposed action on the part of the government.

If the government is going to act, I might ask why was such intention not set out in the speech from the throne. The answer to that is easy. The government will say that it did not really intend, at the time it brought down the speech, to take any action along these lines; but all the speeches from Liberal members have persuaded them that it is in the public interest. I can just hear the Minister of National Health and Welfare making the announcement; I can see his speech as though it had already been prepared.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we shall support such a proposition; in fact, we have urged it for years. The \$40 basic pension paid now is not worth as much as the \$20 when it was first paid in my province in 1929. In the most recent cost of living index it is reported that food is one of the commodities which have contributed toward the further increase in living costs. The situation, as we have pointed out for so long, is desperate. In only three provinces in Canada have pension recipients received any additional income since this \$40 basic pension was brought into operation. In Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia the pensioners secure substantially more than the basic \$40, and there is not a Liberal government in any one of those three provinces.

An hon. Member: Thank God.

Mr. Studer: You are using Liberal money.

Mr. Shaw: That is an indication of just how thorough the hon. member's knowledge of the whole situation is. There is no section of Canada which has contributed more to the welfare of this nation or to our national economy than the province of Alberta. They have paid for more than this government has ever given or is ever likely to hand back to the people of that province.

Mr. Studer: Then distribute it.

Mr. Shaw: Mr. Speaker, without the provinces there would be no Canada as such. The strength of this nation has come from the provinces and what has been done within the provinces. Sometimes I wonder why it is that over the years the national government has wormed its way more and more into the activities and fields of provincial jurisdiction. Is it so they could hand back a pittance, a few dollars, to the provinces and then claim credit for everything that was being done in the provinces.

We have seen that in connection with hospital construction. True, the national government is contributing toward hospital construction, but you could not build one hospital with what they give. The municipalities bear part of the burden. Ottawa says, "We will hand this much back to you if the provincial governments will match it dollar for dollar". They are giving us nothing. They are handing back to us part of what they have taken from us.

Nothing in this day and age, Mr. Speaker, short of an additional \$20 a month to the recipients of old age security, a purely federal responsibility, will suffice. Nothing short of authorization to the provincial governments to increase the basic pension under the Old Age Assistance Act by \$20 will suffice. There will still be some fringe difficulties, but at least we will be recognizing a need and we will be assuming our responsibility to our pioneer citizens.

I am going to move an amendment, Mr. Speaker, but before doing so may I suggest that there are people who will give lip service to certain propositions but who are strangely absent when it comes to a question of giving their open support. We feel that the members of this house should be given the opportunity to show clearly where they stand. For that reason I move, seconded by the hon. member for Battle River-Camrose (Mr. Smith):

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "parliament" the following words:

"and, by reason of their failure to take effective action to stop the continuous rise in the cost of living; their failure to lay down and follow policies under which Canadian farmers and other primary producers can enjoy an equitable share of the prosperity which Canada can achieve; and their failure to bring old age pensions and other social security payments into line with the present cost of living."

Here is a great opportunity—

An hon. Member: Contradictory.

Mr. Shaw: —for members of the house to face up to things in a practical manner. Some Liberal is going to say that this is a want of confidence motion. Well, what if it is; what