

Old Age Security Act

income supplement because 50 per cent of the additional money they receive through the guaranteed income supplement will be deducted from their pension. The \$15 a month they receive from the welfare department will be deducted from the amount they receive from the Veterans Affairs Department. Nowhere in his budget does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) estimate the saving to the government as a result of the lowering of the pension by \$15 a month to 46,500 veterans. I ask him the reason for this. Let us keep in mind also that the government announcement has been very misleading.

• (1430)

Most Canadians believe that the guaranteed income supplement is to rise by \$15 a month from its April, 1972 level. I would like the minister to correct me if I am wrong when I say it will not do so. It is the combined old age security-guaranteed income supplement payment that will go up by \$15. I wish to ask the minister whether that is correct, and if not I would like him to clarify that point. There is only an increase of \$9.42 per month for a single pensioner, not the \$15 per month that the minister told us about here. I am sure that people do not realize this, and I wonder how many members of the minister's own party realize it. Married couples who each received a GIS payment of \$50.05 in April 1971, will now receive \$9.42 per month more, a payment of \$59.62. Although these are good additional sums, the point is that GIS recipients will be getting less than \$10 a month, although they have been led by the government to believe that they would be getting an extra \$15. Can we blame them if they feel cheated when their first GIS cheque arrives under the new system? The Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) are guilty of misleading Canada's old age pensioners. Perhaps the Minister of National Health and Welfare will tell us whether or not this is intentional. Such behaviour is almost fraudulent, for no efforts have been made by them to correct the mistaken impression which their announcement originally and intentionally gave.

The minister spoke about what he did in the field of housing, but he forgot to tell us that this was only marginal assistance. He should get down to brass tacks. Let us consider a typical small Ontario city. I picked out at random a city which has 2,349 pensioners of whom 1,500 are on GIS. The average rent for a bachelor apartment in that city is \$125 per month, and the average rent for a one bedroom apartment is \$150 per month. The construction of how many of those units was subsidized? In that city, only 15 single units renting at \$37 per month were made available to old age pensioners, and only 12 units for married couples. I want to point out to the minister that only 39 people benefited out of the 1,500 who were on the guaranteed income supplement. Let the minister not mislead the public. We must realize that probably 50 per cent of the total income of those pensioners was spent on shelter. In the case of a single person, only about \$50 a month is left to cover food, clothing and the other necessities of life. If that is the good life about which the Minister of National Health and Welfare speaks, then I do not want it.

The minister referred to the Canada Assistance Plan. He says that, surely the Canada Assistance Plan will

[Mr. Rynard.]

cover the costs if the provinces and the municipalities are short of money. This is the minister's ace in the hole. He does not say it is a shared cost program, and if the provinces or the municipalities do not have the money, why does the minister not take care of it?

The minister also spoke about drug care. He forgot to tell us that this is not a compulsory program, that provision of food, shelter and clothes is compulsory, not drugs. If that is not so I would like him to tell us. Let us quit fooling the people. The minister spoke as if he had a drug care plan. He says that if the provinces or municipalities can pick up the tab, he will match it, but how many of them are in the financial position to do so?

Then, the minister spoke about chronic care homes. This is a subject that concerns me. Instead of hearing platitudes from the minister, I would have preferred him to say why the chronically ill who need nursing round the clock have to pay a deterrent fee of \$3.50 a day in Ontario. He did not mention that when he spoke about all the benefits that were given to the old people. Surely, under the Canada Assistance Plan the federal government will pay half of the balance of what is left after the provinces have paid their share. What is the cost? The Minister of National Health and Welfare surely has those figures. I believe it is around \$15 a day.

Now, I would like to dwell for a minute on the Canada Pension Plan. When the pensioners receive their pension under the Canada Pension Plan their guaranteed income supplement payments will be reduced. The minister neglected to tell us that also. There are many things that he passed over. The minister spoke about the talents of the experienced executives. I was glad to hear him refer to that because I think it is worth while to point it out. He did not mention that there were many doctors who had retired but who are now in Africa, South America and the British West Indies doing valuable work teaching some of their students the art of surgery. As a matter of fact, Dr. McClure is now in Viet Nam doing valuable work. He is a very well known surgeon. I mentioned my own profession but there are many other fields such as public health, social services and industry from which experienced people who have retired can be of assistance. This is the area into which we should be mainstreaming all our retired senior citizens who are able to carry on physically and mentally.

The minister also spoke about the adequacy of pensions. He did not state that they have recently become adequate only because he knew that he would be in trouble somewhere along the line. We must make provision for a quality of life that has changed over the years. All we have to do is to think back to the standard of life 30 years ago. The advance in technology has brought about many changes in our life. This is why I believe that pensions should be tied to the gross national product rather than just to the rising cost of living. We believe that this measure is worthwhile and we on our side welcome it. I am glad that we have been able to put sufficient pressure on the minister and that finally he has seen the light. After having made those observations regarding the minister's stubborn refusal to listen to the plight of the old age pensioners, let me say that I am pleased that he has taken