

Disabled Persons Act

progress. I remember having had something to say about this myself when we were discussing a pensions measure in the house on July 19, 1960, and it has a bearing on the measure before us. I said at that time, as found on page 6509 of *Hansard*:

As a responsible official opposition we do not ignore the relationship between social security and financial and economic resources. We know that no government that is responsible in the economic as well as the political sense of the word can do everything. We know that developing social security schemes must be related to the resources of the nation because there is only one way in which these schemes can be financed, namely, by us as citizens of the country. So we on this side do not ignore that aspect of the question and we never have as a party in the past.

Then I went on to say:

—it is clear to us, as I am sure it is clear to every hon. member of this house, that the claims of old age pensioners—

We were talking about old age pensioners, and this applies to those now receiving disability allowances.

—must be very high on the list of priorities when we are considering what more we can do in developing schemes for responsible social security and social progress.

In the same sense the claims of those who suffer from disabilities which prevent them from working and earning their own livelihood are very high on our list of priorities. There is in our minds a question as to the adequacy of this particular measure. Certainly if we applied the test once applied by the Prime Minister to the adequacy of social security payments there might be good reason to think that the increase recommended was not adequate, because the Prime Minister said on April 25, 1957, "A Conservative government would set payments high enough to meet needs". Whether this increase is high enough to meet needs is certainly debatable.

The increase in the disability allowances from \$55 to \$65 is to be shared with the provinces. The increase can only be brought into operation with the approval of the provinces and, as has been pointed out previously, we are only now asking through this legislation for the necessary approval so that the increase can be brought into effect.

Rather than the proposed increase to \$65—and this is consistent with the stand we have taken on other social security measures—we feel that these allowances should be raised to a minimum of \$75, which would mean a proportionate increase in the income limits. In addition, Mr. Chairman, these disability allowances have to be related in our minds, of course, to the proposal for disability pensions as part of a contributory pension scheme. It is surely of the greatest possible

importance to have a pension scheme with disability benefits as well as disability allowances.

As we have in the case of the other resolutions, Mr. Chairman, we support the increase in this case from \$55 to \$65 to be shared with the provinces but we feel, as we have felt in the other cases, that the minimum should be \$75 rather than \$65.

Mr. Diefenbaker: In view of the fact, Mr. Chairman, that the Leader of the Opposition has chosen to speak on this matter and to deal in general with the question of social security as well as the degree to which social security is of major importance today, I feel that I might be permitted to speak shortly on this matter and deal with the problem in general but with particular reference to the resolution now before the committee.

The Leader of the Opposition has stated his views with regard to this question. He has stated that the amount should be \$75 a month. In general he has traversed in rather capsule form some of the arguments that have been advanced before. I intend to refer to the attitude of this government on the question of social security. I agree with him as to his general observations respecting need. I might add to what he has said about social security by saying that in the field of social justice there have been tremendous advances made in the last 30 or 40 years.

Now, speaking from memory, I recall that during the days of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, prime minister of the United Kingdom during the first five or six years of the present century, he was faced with a candidate in Scotland who advanced, amongst other ideas, certain reforms which he contended ought to be brought into effect. There was female suffrage, and assistance to those who were unemployed or unable to work and thereby deprived their families of the source of a proper livelihood. This candidate also advanced a suggestion for something in the nature of old age pensions. The then Liberal prime minister of the United Kingdom said that these doctrines were dangerous and would ultimately bring about the disintegration of the United Kingdom.

With the passing years, however, the need for accepting social security has become more and more apparent and has been accepted by all. In setting up a social security system, we must maintain the independence and freedom of the individual. Some there are who would set up a social security system very much like that in effect in some penal institutions, where you have everything but