

Supply

Mr. Cafik: Such suggestions make a mockery of all the talk one hears about increasing the old age pension and the guaranteed income supplement. All members, on both sides of the House know of the need in this area.

Mr. Nielsen: Then bring in the legislation.

Mr. Cafik: And that is not all the elderly need. They also need—

Mr. Nielsen: Understanding.

Mr. Cafik:—funds, to enable them to take the initiative with their own projects and make their lives fuller and richer. It is very important that we take cognizance of that, now.

Mr. Nielsen: Bring in the legislation.

Mr. Cafik: I think it is important that we, in this House, subscribe to projects that will benefit these people.

Mr. Nielsen: We do.

Mr. Cafik: I am astonished that those on the other side of the House can question the value of the New Horizons program.

Mr. Nielsen: Rubbish.

Mr. Cafik: It is clearly in the interest of people in the senior age group.

Mr. Nielsen: Rubbish.

Mr. Cafik: I notice the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) says this is rubbish. In that case I suggest—

Mr. Nielsen: The hon. member's speech is rubbish.

Mr. Cafik:—that he vote against the New Horizons program.

Mr. Nielsen: Of course, we will not.

Mr. Cafik: I am confident that they would not support him in his motion to scrap these two programs—nor will I.

Mr. Nielsen: Rubbish.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I understand that, by agreement, we are now debating in one package notices Nos. 6, 7 and 8 on today's notice paper having to do with certain supplementary estimates for the Department of National Health and Welfare. Notices 6 and 7 relate to the general heading of income security and social assistance. I shall have a few words to say on this topic. Notice No. 8 has to do with fitness and amateur sports. My colleague, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes), will speak about that a little later this afternoon.

It could be contended that the money being asked for under the votes covered by notices 6 and 7 is for a specific purpose, rather a narrow one, as it were; however, since the heading on this vote is a general one, to do with income security and social assistance, I felt that the Chair had no option this morning but that of allowing the hon.

[Mr. Cafik.]

member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) to range generally over the subject. I am glad the hon. member established that precedent, so that I can do it, too.

I have been impressed with the attention that the new Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) has given to the responsibilities of his department. All the noises he has made thus far have been in the right direction. I commend him for his activity. However, Sir, I must impress on him the urgency of getting moving with some of the programs for which he is responsible.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): As I have suggested that he should get moving—even though my next remark may be lifted out of the logical order in which I try to make my speeches—I wish to say to him that he ought, this afternoon before five o'clock, to file with the table the notice of introduction of the government's bill to amend the Old Age Security Act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It was promised in the Speech from the Throne and it has been confirmed every time the minister has been questioned about it. We are told that there is to be an increase in the old age security pension; we are led to believe that the increase will be in the basic amount. We have been told it will be a substantial increase. We are further told that the government is concerned about those under 65 years old. We, therefore, hope that the bill will do something in that area, either by lowering the eligible age generally or by providing for the pension to be paid to spouses under 65 in cases where one spouse is already a pensioner.

I do not know how we can get it across to the government that every day counts. Every day on which an old age pensioner tries to make out on his meagre income, every day on which a pensioner learns that the cost of living is going up, is a catastrophe. It is a crisis for those people. I trust that the government is not putting off helping those people until February 19.

Mr. Nielsen: That is exactly what it will do and that will be your carrot.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I hope the minister is not planning on that, so that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) when he makes his budget speech, can announce what the Minister of National Health and Welfare is going to do for senior citizens.

Mr. Nielsen: That will be your carrot.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That is ten days away.

Mr. Nielsen: That is going to be your carrot.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Our older people cannot buy carrots unless they are given an increase in their pensions.

Mr. Nielsen: I am glad to hear the hon. member say so.