

Canada Pension Plan

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Monteith: Let me repeat. In all those years of surpluses they did not care two hoots for the welfare of the common man or the aged, who were forced to get along on \$40 a month.

An hon. Member: What has this got to do with contributory pensions?

Mr. Monteith: As I said before, in 1957 they held out as election bait an increase of \$6 per month in old age security, effective July 1 or after the date of the election. It was a straight bribe to the old people.

Mr. Winkler: A real Grit trick.

Mr. Monteith: But I should like to point out that in the almost six years we were in office we actually legislated for an increase of \$19 per month, and it was only as a result of our insistence that the \$10 increase of last October 1 was forthcoming.

An hon. Member: This is the thirtieth time you have said that tonight.

Mr. Monteith: We know that the minister in her speech to the house last July 18 said that the \$10 increase, which the Liberals had promised during the last election would go into effect immediately, would not be put into force until early 1964. Again I repeat that we forced this increase, and can take the responsibility or credit for the total amount of the increase in these pensions, ever since they were at the level of \$46 a month.

For the information of the present government, who have been promising so much and doing so little, I think that a few of our other accomplishments in the welfare field should be mentioned. I have here a booklet entitled "Social Security for Canada", which is a policy statement adopted at the annual meeting of the Canadian welfare council, June 2, 1958. This is a very comprehensive booklet and while not all the things suggested in it were possible I should like to mention just a few of the matters to which we gave consideration. For instance, recommendation No. 2 reads as follows:

Consideration should be given to arrangements which would enable certain classes of people in the 65-69 age group to qualify for the old age security pension.

This was considered by us and embodied in our plan for which we failed to secure agreement from all the provinces.

An hon. Member: Is that the reason why you did not bring it in?

Mr. Monteith: When we first came into power we were cognizant of the need for study in regard to old age security and contributory pensions. Consequently, Mr. Chairman, we appointed Dr. Robert Clark of the

University of British Columbia to make a study for us of the old age and survivors insurance program in the United States.

The Chairman: Order. I apologize for interrupting the hon. member but his time has expired unless he has unanimous consent to continue. Is it agreed that the hon. member has unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Read on.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, I should like to suggest that if the first speaker for each of the parties were allowed extra time we might be able to confine ourselves to one speaker for each party.

Mr. Monteith: I should like to thank the house for its courtesy in allowing me extra time. I had just mentioned that we appointed Dr. Robert Clark of the University of British Columbia to prepare a study for us on the old age and survivors insurance program in the United States. This he did.

After many meetings of the interdepartmental committee of officials, we were prepared to present our contributory plan for all Canadians. It was then we applied to the provinces for an amendment to the British North America Act, which would permit us to provide survivorship and disability pensions. As the house knows, this was refused by the province of Quebec.

There are other departments in the health and welfare field about which our government, when in power, saw fit to do something, so that there would be a semblance of social justice for the people of Canada. The hon. member for Greenwood has been questioning the minister as to whether or not the present government would consider increasing grants for hospital bed construction. We doubled those grants back at the beginning of 1958, realizing that the previous government had refused to face the fact that construction costs had increased so greatly since these grants were first brought into being in 1949. This was only one item.

Another discrepancy in the legislation at that time was the fact that unemployment assistance could only be paid to provinces who signed agreements with Canada, and then only if .45 per cent of the population of the province was unemployed. We rectified this early in 1958 so that the federal government would share 50 per cent of all unemployment assistance benefits paid by the provinces, without any ceiling on the number of unemployed. This actual expenditure by the federal government on behalf of the citizens of Canada has increased from something like \$8 million when we came into office to an estimated amount for this current