

would be \$100 times that figure, which I think would be \$1.803 billion.

The Deputy Chairman: And if you doubled that?

Senator Argue: You would save a little on the guaranteed income supplement.

Mr. Cafik: I do not think there would be any effect on the GIS, because one is not related to the other; one is not considered as income in relation to the GIS.

Senator Argue: What if the eligible age were reduced to 60? I am sure you have had similar questions before in the House of Commons, but I thought that for purposes of third reading debate it might be interesting to have this information.

Mr. Cafik: In response to the question as to lowering the age, say, from 65 to 60, if that were to be done on an increment of one year at a time, which is being considered by many people, the effect for 1973-74 would be an increase in expenditures of \$191 million; for 1974-75, which would take the 63s and 64s into the system, the expenditure would be another \$413 million; for 1975-76, which would take in the 62s, 63s and 64s, the expenditure would be \$667 million; for 1976-77, which would take in 61 through to 64, it would be \$953 million; and for 1977-78, bringing us right down to age 60, the cost would be \$1.2758 billion.

I do not have the exact figure, but if we were to drop the eligibility age to 60 for the immediate current year in one swoop, I should think the cost would be in the area of \$1 billion or more.

Senator Argue: And if you were to drop the age to 60 for the spouse?

Mr. Cafik: On an annual increment basis for spouses only, the cost for the first year would be \$14.2 million; the second year, \$33.8 million; the third year \$50.2 million, the fourth year, \$68.4 million. The effect of adding spouses, if they are not in that age group normally entitled under the present act, for the whole five-year period, 1962 to 1965, would be \$86.3 million. (See appendix "C")

The Deputy Chairman: Are there any further questions?

Senator Argue: If no other senator has a question, I should like to get some information respecting the supplements paid to pensioners in nursing homes. I have some figures which show that as of a recent date the comfort allowances vary. Manitoba seems to be the lowest, at \$14.21 a month for a socially active person, going up to a projected increase April 1 in Quebec of \$50 a month. What efforts, if any, have been made to persuade the provinces to provide a more adequate comfort allowance? What efforts, if any, have been made to persuade the provinces and others to pass on the increase provided for in this legislation?

It is a terrible thing that the very groups of pensioners who need this increase most—and I think that these people are the ones who need it most—may not, in many provinces, as things transpire, get a

penny extra as a result of this legislation. I have had these people come to me personally and I can tell you that they literally weep. They hear on the radio or television that the federal government is increasing the old age security pension or the guaranteed income supplement, and are elated at the thought of getting another \$10 a month; and then they find out that all the satisfaction they get is signing over to the authorities a cheque of a larger amount than the last one. What has your department been doing in this respect?

Mr. Cafik: That is a very important question, senator, and one that is of considerable concern to the department. It goes without saying that the establishment of the comfort allowance is within provincial jurisdiction; the provinces determine what the comfort allowance is to be. We would certainly like to see the benefit of this increase go directly to the old age pensioners, but in the case of those living in provincial institutions and being cared for in that way there does not appear to be anything we can do directly from a jurisdictional standpoint. The only means we have is by way of persuasion in our discussions with the provinces in the hope that they will respond in what we consider a responsible way to see that those pensioners in the homes get at least some benefit from the increase provided for in this legislation. This is a difficult and tough problem with which to deal.

I alluded earlier to an overall review of social policy which is to take place during Easter week. Two days are set aside for the provincial ministers of welfare and for the Minister of National Health and Welfare in order that they can discuss the whole problem of social security in Canada. At that time we will be looking not only into the problems of the elderly in this country in relationship to old age security and guaranteed income supplement, but also into such problems as family allowances and, hopefully, comfort allowances. In other words, we will be looking at the whole range of programs which are designed to help those in need.

I think it is important to underline that in a conference held with those same ministers a month or two ago the provinces asked us to make sure that we did not make any basic changes in the present old age security legislation without giving them an opportunity to put forward their views. The provinces have certain social priorities as well. They were very insistent that we make no basic structural changes in this plan until we have had an opportunity to sit down and hammer things out with them so that they could be sure that all of the social problems were given the right kind of priority.

Senator Argue: What kind of basic things might you be thinking about?

Mr. Cafik: In terms of the overall social policy review?

Senator Argue: Yes. You stated that the provinces did not wish you to make any basic changes in the structure of the Old Age Security Act. Can you give us an example of a change which might be considered a change in the basic structure?

Mr. Cafik: The things talked about publicly which gave rise to some concern on the part of the provinces were, for example, the lowering of the age to 60 or adding the spouses of those who are