

### Old Age Security

history because now, of course, we must talk about incentives. This is one aspect that troubles me. I do not think we should make it more difficult for people to be active and, indeed, to be gainfully active.

Another observation that I must make in connection with the white paper and the general approach which is put forward—I do not pretend to disagree with everything in the white paper; it would be both narrowminded and dishonest if I said that—is that I think there must be greater sensitivity on the part of government as a whole and all emanations of it. The thing that troubles me very much is the way in which senior citizens are put to great discomfort. I know many, many people who receive war veterans allowance. Then they reach a stage where they come up against the guaranteed annual supplement, and there are months when they are cut down in their payments and they do not know why; they cannot understand what bureaucracy, what the government, the state, is doing.

I find great areas of insensitivity. For instance, one I have been troubled about for a long time—and I am meeting insensitivity myself as I take it up with government—concerns a person who was confined to a nursing home, an ill person. An up-to-date nursing home if at all possible will get the patient out of bed for a little exercise. That is good medical care. But, by Jove, the person will discover that unless he or she stays in bed for ever and ever, the expense will be disallowed. That person is not considered a bed patient, yet those who are looking after his or her health will properly make every effort to get them out of bed on all reasonable occasions.

• (3:20 p.m.)

A little while ago I had a conversation with a political observer who said, "I believe this government is going to call an election. In this country, when governments start jacking up old age pensions it always means they are going to call an election." I reflected upon that for a moment and felt that it was unlikely because it was only a few years ago that we had one.

**An hon. Member:** That is a Tory tactic.

**Mr. Macquarrie:** But when the book was opened and I saw the 42 cents there, I was convinced that no amount of charisma, no prolongation of Information Canada—

**Mr. Baldwin:** And no slouch-hat!

**Mr. Macquarrie:**—no appeal, re-appeal or white paper could make that look sufficiently attractive. No one can make 42 cents look like a munificent abundance, even at the Christmas season. So I told this man I did not think there would be an election over this issue or any other; but I think he had long since divined that such was the case.

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, again and again the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro)

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

have told the people of Canada that the government proposes that the rich will be asked to pay the cost of meeting the needs of the poor, the old and the sick. This bill which we are discussing is supposedly the first step toward the bright new world which this social security system will bring.

It would be interesting, however, if this House and the people of Canada could see what the government has successfully hidden; if they could see the study on social security prepared by Dr. Willard, and the white paper tabled by the minister. In the light of past studies and testimony given by Dr. Willard, I am sure there is a world of difference between what he proposed and what the government has decided is politically feasible and attractive.

There is nothing in these proposals, Mr. Speaker, which can be taken to mean what the Prime Minister has said so often, that the rich will be asked to pay to help the poor. What is being asked is that the poor pay to help those who are even more poor. It is obvious that the payments already made to the old age security fund, and the increased payments which are now called for, will provide sufficient money to pay the increased benefits proposed for those who qualify for the supplement.

I am sure many members on the government side share our concern about this division of people receiving old age pensioners. Many of us are concerned about 800,000 people now receiving the old age pension, those who have been getting the basic pension of \$75 a month set forth in the legislation of 1966 plus the cost of living bonus which brought their total up to \$79 a month. As of January, 1971, they would have received \$81 a month, but with the passage of this bill that \$81 will be reduced. In fact, we will be telling those 800,000 people that from January, 1971, they will receive not more than \$80 a month and there will be no increase in that fixed amount.

In the province of Manitoba, almost 50 per cent of the 94,000 people receiving old age benefits receive no guaranteed income supplement. Are they rich people, as implied by the Prime Minister? Are they so wealthy that they do not need the extra income? Of course that is not true. A few of them may have supplementary incomes but most of those receiving the old age pension alone are existing because they have modest savings or a pension, in many cases, based on employment before or just after World War II when wages were very much lower than they are today so the pension is relatively low.

I do not intend to put the figures on the record but hon. members know that over the years the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has asked many questions about CNR and CPR pensions. Members know that only a small percentage of former employees of the CNR, Air Canada, CPR or even of the city of Winnipeg have any other pension. For the most part, these people have incomes of between \$2,500 and \$4,200 a year. Not only will they be denied a supplement to their basic pension but it will be fixed at the niggardly amount of \$80 a month.

Senator Croll's committee on poverty has done important and useful work. It is not often that I feel inclined to