

Government Orders

indicated in the ruling itself that it would apply for the time being.

I rise now to indicate my own hope that at the beginning of Question Period today the Speaker might indicate his disposition as to whether, for the reasons raised on this side of the House at the beginning of proceedings today, that we might know before the beginning of Question Period his disposition as to the continuation of that ruling on *sub judice*.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair has noted the hon. member's comments and they will be relayed to the Speaker. Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, October 18, consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Madam Speaker, in 1951 it took a constitutional amendment to clear the path for the federal government to introduce the national old age pension program. The only requirement to receive a pension was that one be elderly and Canadian.

[*Translation*]

The OAS program was the result of an all-party committee report—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair would appreciate a little more silence so that I can hear the hon. member. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, the OAS program was the result of an all-party committee report supported unanimously across the country.

[*English*]

The most succinct and clear statement on what seniors could henceforth enjoy came from a member of the opposition, the Hon. Donald Fleming. Mr. Fleming said, "We are departing as far as we can from the idea of any handout, any payment as of grace, and are seeking to supplant that type of payment with a payment which will be received by the pensioner as of right". It is too bad Conservatives today do not understand, as this hon. Tory member did, what a pension is and what an entitlement is.

• (1240)

Parliamentarians then were very clear about what they intended to accomplish: basic income security for every elderly citizen based not on any needs test but on their having contributed to the building of Canada throughout their lifetime. And to make their meaning absolutely clear, that this was not welfare, not charity, not income dependent, they set it up as a contributory plan so that everybody would know that they were paying for a pension. Initially every taxpayer contributed 2 per cent extra tax to a plan that was to pay no more than it took in. That contribution doubled over the years to 4 per cent until in 1971 it was simply rolled in to the over-all tax rate and every taxpayer continued to contribute.

When that was done in 1971, the words of Mr. Stanley Knowles were prophetic and they are being realized today. Mr. Knowles expressed his concern about abandoning the special taxes that funded a separate old age security fund. He said, "This will put the government in the position of being able to play fast and loose with the whole question of old age security and even abolish its universality".

The finance minister of the day, Mr. Edgar Benson, gave Mr. Knowles what he thought was an iron-clad guarantee that this would not happen when he said that: "The right is given to the pensioner by Parliament. The only way of changing this would be for the government to amend the Old Age Security Act".