

Canada Pension Plan

therefore we must accept that fact. Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, I want to make it quite clear that we in this group are in support of a basic pension of \$100 per month for our senior citizens. In view of the fact it is unlikely the government is going to move to make this increase available immediately, we are suggesting that at the same time there is this lowering of the age of eligibility there should be a gradual increase in the pension payable until at the time when the pension is payable at 65 pensioners may receive a basic pension of \$100 per month. This is our proposal, and we believe it is well within the realm of possibility, just as we believe the other proposal is within the realm of possibility. Unless the government is prepared to make an immediate increase, we suggest consideration be given to incorporating into this measure the proposal that the pension would be increased \$5 per month per year until it reaches a maximum of \$100 when the pension is received at age 65.

There are many arguments we could advance in this connection. I do not believe it is necessary at this late stage in the debate, nor do I think it is advisable. Nevertheless, we wanted to present this proposal for the consideration of the committee and the minister. There is one other question with relation to the senior citizens' position. It has to do with those who are in the single category. It has been pointed out that the basic pension is \$75. This is reasonable, perhaps, if both the husband and wife are receiving the pension. However, in the case of a single pensioner, whose costs for rent and other things continue just the same, I do not believe it is reasonable. I believe, therefore, there should be a bonus of some kind or an increase paid to those who are in the single category to enable them to meet the high cost of living which, in the case of married people, is shared between the two receiving the old age pension. As I pointed out, I did not intend to speak at length at this time. There will be other members taking part, but I did want to advance these suggestions for the consideration of the committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Perron: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few brief remarks concerning the resolution to amend part IV of Bill No. C-136. I also have a few suggestions concerning what the charming and able Minister of National Health and Welfare told us when she introduced that resolution a while ago and stated that the only objection to this provision is that it is too generous. In fact, she stated

[*Mr. Patterson.*]

very clearly that the only charge that could be levelled was that we were granting too much. She also said that it was a great step forward in the field of social security.

My colleague from Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) said that the words "social justice" could be added to that remark concerning social security.

Following the hon. member for Edmonton West, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) claimed that his group was the first to ask in this house social security based on true social justice; and he was highly pleased with this step toward a true social security in Canada.

In my opinion, the charming Minister of National Health and Welfare was not too serious when she spoke about criticism that there were too generous features in Bill No. C-136 and the resolution which we are now discussing and which will enable five years hence those who have reached the age of 65, to benefit from this pension under the proposed amendments to this Bill No. C-136.

It is evident that many principles are involved, because social security and social justice are mentioned in connection with Bill No. C-136.

But I will stick to the principle of social justice, and there were those who tried to justify the retirement, not compulsory but desirable, at age 65 of all those who wished to continue in some employment; that is what is called geriatrics. Geriatrics deals with the older person who wants to continue some activity, salaried or not.

Now, many principles are involved when one speaks of social security and social justice.

The charming minister told us that this amendment to Bill No. C-136 will enable people who otherwise would not be covered to retire in security and with dignity. This is very well, it is well thought, it is even very well said. But I wonder what the millions of Canadian workers will think of such nice and friendly words which mean that they will be able, at age 65, to retire in security and with dignity, when during their 20 or 40 years of active life, they have not even lived in decent conditions, because of this very system which today compels our governments to introduce legislation such as this Bill No. C-136? Finance compels us to restrict the social security conditions of the Canadian people to the limitation of dollars our people can have at their disposal.

I mentioned geriatrics a while ago. It is already admitted, by many thinkers, sociologists and trade union representatives that