

alter the principle. I think I made this point clear before and I do not need to elaborate on it.

**Hon. W. Ross Macdonald:** Honourable senators, at the outset I would like to congratulate the honourable gentleman from Mille Isles (Hon. Mr. Monette) on the splendid presentation which he has made of the first bill he has undertaken to explain in this chamber.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** We have been given a very clear understanding of the bill, and I hope we can look forward to hearing the honourable gentleman address the house for many years to come.

Honourable senators, in rising to speak at this time I want it to be clearly understood that I am not opposing the bill. I do not want somebody to say after I sit down that I am against it.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Don't look at me.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** I want that to be clearly understood. At the same time I want it to be understood that, so far as I am concerned, and other honourable senators with whom I have spoken, I expect that when a bill is presented to this house for our consideration it will be fully explained to us. We want to reserve the right to examine every measure critically, so that we may know what it is all about. It is always possible that we might be able to improve proposed legislation, so I do not think when we critically examine a bill we should be accused of holding it up.

I do not believe any of us will take much objection to this bill. The honourable senator from Mille Isles said that the present act was the result of an all-party understanding and decision. I think I can assure him that this amending bill will receive the approval of both parties in this house. The provisions of the bill, which have been explained to us fully, increase the amount of the pension from \$46 to \$55 per month. This is in accordance with the history of the legislation. The sponsor of the bill went back to 1950. I will go back to 1925 or 1926 when the original legislation was introduced by the administration of that day, and when it provided for a payment of \$20 per month, subject to a means test. That does not seem like very much money now, but in 1925 \$20 was equivalent in value to probably \$45 to \$55 today. I believe that at that time a person did have to be a naturalized citizen to qualify under the act.

**Hon. Mr. Reid:** He certainly did, when the legislation first came in.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** I was not here in 1925, so I do not know.

**Hon. Mr. Reid:** Why did you answer my question then? Keep quiet unless you know.

**Hon. Mr. Croll:** In 1950 a person was not required to be a citizen. I was a member of the committee handling this legislation and I know.

**Hon. Mr. Reid:** I said that when the legislation first came in a person had to be a citizen of Canada.

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** Order.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Mr. Macdonald:** I will now thank these two honourable senators for assisting me.

We come down to 1950, when a universal old age pension of \$40 a month was made available to all citizens of 70 years of age and over. That amount was increased to \$46 a month earlier this year. In accordance with the plan of increasing the amount from time to time, it is now proposed to increase the payment to \$55 a month. I think we are all in favour of that proposal.

The next interesting feature of this bill is that residence in Canada for a period of only ten years is required. The previous provision required an applicant to have resided in Canada at least 20 years. Why the period has been reduced to ten years and not to 15 or five, I do not know, but it strikes me as somewhat strange that a person coming to this country can be naturalized after being a resident for five years, and when naturalized, can have all the privileges of citizenship with the exception only of the right to get the old age pension. He has the right to vote; he can come to and go from this country; he can get a passport. In fact, the Citizenship Act provides that a person who has been in Canada for five years is domiciled here—that Canada is his place of domicile. He is not automatically a citizen after five years' residence unless he applies to the court, but he has a domicile here after having been here for five years, and can apply for citizenship and obtain all the rights of a citizen with the exception, as I have said, of the right to claim an old age pension.

Still another interesting point is that when a person comes to this country with children of 16 years of age and under, as soon as they arrive on the shores of this land they receive the family allowance, yet for some reason or other the parents cannot qualify for the old age pension until they have lived here ten years. Honourable senators, I know it is not within the power of this house to reduce