

get a certain figure or grant, a certain raise or receive a certain pension may, through hearing the hon. member and because of the respect and esteem with which he is held in this House, feel that in effect that is what they should have received in the first place. This holds out the kind of false hope which may make them feel a little unhappy about their present circumstances.

Whether it be this particular piece of legislation or others, all of us have hobby-horses which we like to ride around. Sometimes we like to try them out on a political platform, when speaking on radio or television, at committee meetings or during what are referred to colloquially as "bull sessions." I doubt if there is anyone in this House who would not like to see the basic income tax exemption go up to \$2,500 for single persons and \$5,000 for married couples. But when you look at what this would cost in terms of revenue and, more importantly not so much what it would cost the taxpayers of Canada but what it would cost someone in the \$6,000 tax bracket, you realize you have to separate the wheat from the chaff and that you have to make difficult decisions which, unhappily, do not appeal to the single man making \$2,500 or the married man making \$5,000. Sooner or later a responsible decision must be made.

There are other suggestions which are analogous to the bill before us. There are suggestions that old age pensions should be increased to \$125 per month and that the guaranteed income supplement should be over and above that.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): One hundred and fifty dollars.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I think the hon. member just spent about \$3 billion in that little phrase. I do not think he or anyone else is irresponsible in suggesting that this is a target at which we should be shooting. But I think we must remind the average citizen of the other side of the coin, that is, that there are 800,000 or 900,000 people over the age of 65 who are probably drawing the guaranteed income supplement now, and if my statistics are correct I would say there are in the neighbourhood of 1,800,000 or 1,900,000 over age 65. So in recognizing our responsibility not only to the older generation but to the taxpayer who is footing a large portion of the bill, we must be realistic.

Mr. Speaker, we have a suggestion which I believe is a good one. It is the kind of representation or presentation for which the hon. member is well known because it is the kind of move that prods the government. It is not the sort of thing that would cost the taxpayer any great amount of money, and it would not be prohibitive in so far as the employer and people operating under these standards are concerned. This is the kind of legislation I am happy to see our Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) looking at. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has already said that the legislation in respect of which he has moved an amendment has been given second reading and has been referred to the committee. So taking the subject matter of this bill, or the bill itself, and referring it to the committee is in my submission somewhat redundant because, in effect, if amendments

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are to be made, worked out and suggested by the hon. member, I suppose they could be made without the necessity of placing more paperwork before the committee but simply by his being there and making the suggestions or recommendations.

When the federal government moves in this area it is, after all, making moves regarding minimum standards. I emphasize the word "minimum" because, surely, we are setting up a framework for employers who, unhappily, in the past have not seen their way clear to do the kind of things suggested under the minimum standards legislation because had they done so there would not be any necessity to move this kind of legislation. I am not so young that I cannot think back to the 1930s when my father worked for a mining concern. He worked seven days a week during the winter. He never saw the light of day, because he went underground at a particular hour in the morning and came up at a particular hour in the evening. At no time did he see daylight. It was not portal to portal; it was from the time you reach your working place until the moment you leave it. Holidays were based on the Scrooge-like idea that you might get Christmas, but very seldom Boxing Day unless it fell on a Sunday.

• (4:30 p.m.)

So by dint of good legislation we have set down that no employees in Canada, particularly those under federal jurisdiction, have to worry about the Scrooge-like approach of the employer to the employee. Through the kind of legislation that we have before us—I am not referring specifically to the hon. member's bill but to the bill he chooses to amend—we are in effect setting minimum standards. These standards have to be set in conjunction with those set by the provinces. It is not our wish to unduly embarrass a province. In effect, we could move that certain action be taken which might prod a provincial government into moving in the right direction. If we do that in appropriate fashion, I think it is more beneficial to the worker: we will not have antagonism between the provinces and the federal government but the kind of co-operation that I would like to see when we deal with something as basic as minimum labour standards for the work force.

When I refer to minimum standards, although in effect we are only dealing with those who come under federal jurisdiction, the provincial legislation of course covers the other 90 per cent. It may be that through taking the lead with that 10 per cent our action can have a profound effect on the benefits which will eventually accrue to those in the provincial field.

I expect that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, after this legislation or something akin to it is passed, will be looking at ILO reports, as I have looked at them, and endeavouring to find other areas where our legislation might be a little weak and where we might try something new, not necessarily new to other countries but something that is new to Canada. When I was doing my research I was interested to find that one of the new developments in some countries is the practice of granting longer holidays based on age rather than length of service. This is the kind of innovative approach that I