

provinces on much less important things than this. It has gone to them secretly at times, and without disclosing to Parliament the discussions that took place with the provinces. I am surprised that the honourable Leader of the Government should ask me why the Government should discuss this with the provinces.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I am just as much surprised that you should make the suggestion.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: Yes, and I am surprised that the honourable Leader of the Government should ask me that question.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Then, we are both surprised.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: If we are, then I will say that this is certainly not the first time that that the honourable Leader of the Government has surprised me, but I should add that it is probably the only occasion on which the surprise has been unpleasant.

I say, honourable senators, that apart from these things I have mentioned, we have here more evidence of ineptitude on the part of the Government. It is almost trite or redundant to criticize the present Government for ineptitude, but I think we have a glaring case of it here.

The plain fact is that the Government has obviously amended the wrong act. This bill has nothing to do, or should have nothing to do, with the Old Age Security Act which, in our "jungle"—as some of the experts call it—of old age social legislation, is the bastion of the principle of universal old age security, available to all at the statutory age without means test, needs test, or any other kind of test.

This bill would certainly have been more acceptable had it been brought in, as it should have been, as an amendment to the Assistance Act, because all this is welfare assistance that is being offered, not a guaranteed annual income.

Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson: You mean the Canada Assistance Act?

Hon. Mr. Grosart: Yes. When I say the Assistance Act I am reminded that we have had a series of such measures, and I use that term to distinguish it from the Old Age Security Act and also to distinguish it from the Canada Pension Plan.

Honourable senators, sooner or later we shall have to add another measure to take

care of those people I mentioned earlier, who will not benefit ten years from now under the Canada Pension Plan, because they will have made no contributions.

The Leader of the Government traced the history of security legislation back to 1927. Perhaps the highlight of that history was what was accomplished in 1952 when, partly as a result of the recommendation of a joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons, we made what was then labelled as a breaking of new ground and the establishment of a great principle for Canada. The idea was that we had at long last caught up with some of the other nations and were able to say that we had one act which grants the universal pension as of right without any needs test. We do not have that any more. We do not have a universal old age pension act any more.

It is significant, and the honourable Leader of the Government mentioned this, that it was necessary to change the wording of paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 2 of the present act. Paragraph (a) says:

"Application" means application for a pension.

And the word "pension" is in italics. It has been necessary to change that wording so that "application" now refers to "benefits." There is all the difference in the world to the self respect of old age pensioners between a pension, which is something they earn as of right, and the benefit, which is something granted to them by a paternalistic government.

It has been said that the Government may be in trouble about this bill.

Hon. Mr. McDonald (Moosomin): I can't think why.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: I can, and to a greater extent when the old age pensioners and others come to realize what has been done by this proposed amendment. I think it is fair to say that it has been done thoughtlessly. However, the means test has been added here to our basic act for the first time since 1952. From 1927 to 1952 there was tremendous opposition by parliamentarians and by the pensioners themselves against this test. Now we have it back.

Honourable senators, this is not what the Senate committee recommended. I hope that when the Government finds itself in the kind of trouble it will find itself in, it will not try to shift the blame to Senator Croll's Committee on Aging. The senator, out of his un-