

Old Age Security Act (No. 2)

I entirely agree with that letter. There is no doubt but that there is a vast area that is left above those rather small incomes, in this day and age. I suppose there are enough people, if there were any justice in this world, to upset the Government. However, I doubt that they will be doing that.

I am glad to see that the Minister of National Health and Welfare is entering the House. She has not yet resolved, to my satisfaction, a problem concerning pensions which I mentioned yesterday. If she would not mind dealing in rough figures, perhaps she could outline what would happen to a pensioner receiving Old Age Security payments of, say, \$250 a month—I believe it is approximately \$253 right now—and also receiving a private pension of \$248 a month, bringing the total just below the area in which one would receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement. I believe the Minister said yesterday that even if one received a supplement of as little as \$2 a month, indexation would apply. I want to know if the indexation would include the indexation of the private pension, because if there is a minimum income which everyone is to receive, it will escalate at the rate of the Consumer Price Index. In order to fill the gap, the example of \$2 which the pensioner draws on the Guaranteed Income Supplement would have to increase by perhaps \$25, from \$2 to \$27 in the next month, from \$27 to \$50, or something like that. I want to know whether that will in fact keep pace with the Consumer Price Index for all of that person's income, not just for the Guaranteed Income Supplement. If so, this would amount to supplementing a private pension, and I feel that that is something the Government should consider and upon which it should make a clear policy statement.

I have completed my remarks, and if the Minister wishes to reply to my question, she will certainly have my concurrence.

[*Translation*]

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Is the Hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) rising on a point of order?

Miss Bégin: No, Mr. Speaker. I thought that under the new system with which I am not yet familiar, I had to reply immediately to the Hon. Member, failing which, the official record would show that the Government had refused to reply. When are we supposed to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): No. Order, please! There is no question and answer period provided for at the report stage. With the unanimous consent of the House, however, including, of course, the Hon. Member who has just resumed his seat, the Minister could perhaps entertain a question.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Has the Minister the unanimous consent of the House to reply to those matters raised by the Hon. Member who has just spoken?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to answer that question because we all care for pensioners. The answer to the Member's question is that if a person receives the basic OAS and a pension from a private source of whatever nature, which is small enough that that person qualifies also for a very small GIS, say \$2 or \$5 a month, then that pensioner is considered to have a total income so low that his or her full OAS and the small GIS is fully indexed. Do I answer correctly?

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That is the worst possible news I could have received. I had hoped that their income would rise to some level that the Minister has in mind, not just a small supplement to each of them because of indexation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roy: Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please! I apologize to the Hon. Member for Laval (Mr. Roy)—

[*English*]

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether on the same grounds that the Minister had an opportunity to put a question, I would like to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I suppose that could be done if there was unanimous consent.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you would make some judgment as to whether the Hon. Member's remarks were factual in that he failed to indicate to the House that he had voted against an amendment—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. I am afraid that is not a point of order, it is debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval): Mr. Speaker, for several reasons I am pleased to speak to the Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (No. 2), but since my time is limited due to the fact that the debate will be ending in a few minutes, I must try and clarify certain aspects which have been left in doubt.

The way the two official Opposition parties see it, it is a disaster, but, as the Minister has kept repeating at the report stage, at second reading or in Committee, it is not a disaster