

*The Address—Mr. Douglas*

in parliament where such amendments have been passed without resulting in a dissolution of parliament.

• (9:00 p.m.)

It has been argued that if one accepts this interpretation it prevents the opposition from turning the government out. This is not correct, because at any time the opposition can move an amendment in specific terms to the effect that the government has lost the confidence of the house and the country. If there were sufficient support for such an amendment, it would be carried. But if an amendment which merely seeks to get an expression of opinion from the house as a whole were passed, the government has three choices. It can, if it chooses, interpret the passing of the amendment as a want of confidence and can act accordingly. Second, it can accept the amendment as reflecting the views of the majority of members in the House of Commons. Third, it can if it chooses submit on its own initiative a motion of confidence to ascertain whether the house wants a dissolution.

We in this party do not intend to be gagged by any fear of an election. We reserve the right not only to express our opinion, but also to ask the house to express its opinion on any matter which we feel to be vitally important.

This afternoon the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) took some exception to this view. He had a much more ingenious interpretation of parliamentary tradition. He said that the passing of an amendment does not necessarily involve dissolution of parliament; that the government can simply resign; that the Governor General can then call upon him to form a government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Douglas:** This comes strangely from the Leader of the Opposition who, in January, 1958, excoriated the opposition of that day for making just such a suggestion.

**Mr. Nielsen:** He just suggested that they change places.

**Mr. Douglas:** Actually what the Leader of the Opposition suggested was that the members of this parliament make him Prime Minister, despite the fact that the Canadian people in two elections by a vote of two to one refused to make him Prime Minister. I wish to say in all kindness to my friends of the P.C.P., that much as the Canadian people dislike the idea of an election, I think they would dislike even more the idea of having the Tories again in office.

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**Mr. Churchill:** They will never have the N.D.P.

**Mr. Douglas:** In the light of what I have said, I would like to look at the amendment which has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I want to make it perfectly clear to the house that we disagree with the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition and his party that an increase in the old age security pension ought to be financed out of the Canada pension fund. The Canada pension fund was set up for the purpose of providing social security and certain benefits to those who have contributed to it over a period of years. It ought not to be interfered with in any way. Any increase in the old age pension ought to be paid for out of the old age security fund, as the pension has been paid in the past and as it should be in the future.

This amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition makes no mention of where the money should come from. Therefore, because of the terms in which it is phrased, namely that the government has failed to provide for an immediate increase from \$75 to \$100 a month for all recipients under the Old Age Security Act—with that we agree completely and we will support it.

However, Mr. Speaker—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Douglas:** —the official opposition has only dealt with part of the problem. We agree with its suggestion that the pension should be raised from \$75 to \$100 a month. However, at the present time no person is eligible to receive that pension until he is 69 years of age. That began only on the 1st of January.

In Canada today retirement for most people takes place at 65 years of age and not at 69 or 70. At the present time the government itself has embarked upon a stage by stage reduction of the age at which the pension will be paid, so that by 1970 persons of 65 will be entitled to the full pension. We do not believe that those who are 66, 67 and 68, as well as those who are 65 right now ought to be penalized because they were born too soon. There is no reason why people in that age group should be refused that benefit, when people five years from now will be entitled to their rights.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I propose to move, seconded by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis):

That the amendment be amended by deleting the period at the end thereof and by adding the following words:

"and have failed to provide for the immediate lowering of the eligible age to 65."