

month. School teachers were earning from about \$300 to \$600 a year. These were mighty hard-earned dollars, and on this money they lived, raised their families and made a contribution to Canadian history and the Canada that we have today. It is interesting to note that the gross national product in 1933 was roughly \$3.5 billion. Today, it is well over \$90 billion and perhaps as much as \$100 billion, some 30 times as great. This is some indication of how our people lived in the thirties.

• (1420)

The minister, who I notice has left the Chamber, conveniently forgets that his party has a poor record in respect of looking after old age pensioners. He would have us believe his party is the only party which is concerned about the old age pensioners and others on fixed income and that only they have done anything for them. Let us go back a little and take a look at the record. It is sometimes a good thing to be reminded of what has happened. The opposition confronted the government from time to time with the poverty situation of many of our older people. Over and over again, we moved motions to have the benefit increased, only to have the motion defeated and the old age pensioners denied their rights. As late as March 23, 1972 the minister, in pious platitudes, denied them what he was finally forced to give them. I shall not use the word "bribe" because I do not want to do so. I will not be cynical enough to use that word, even when there is an election before us. I would point out, however, that there is such an aura surrounding the situation.

There are 1,800,000 old age pensioners, and this could be a very persuasive reason for the government to do something about the situation. I should like to take the minister back a little since he has been quick to place on the record the suggestion that the Liberals were the only ones who had done anything for the old age pensioners. I would like to think that everyone here has tried to make a contribution to our senior citizens. Let us go back to the year 1956 when the pension was \$40 a month. The Liberals at that time brought in an increase of \$6 a month. The slogan at that time was "The six-buck boys". The gross national product then was roughly \$33 billion. Then the Conservative party was elected in 1957 and the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) became the Prime Minister. At that time the old age pension was immediately increased another \$9, bringing the pension to \$55 a month. Today, the gross national product is three times what it was then. The old age pension was then universal. Mr. Speaker, I did not catch the interruption of the minister. He should stand up and repeat it.

Mr. Pepin: I just observed that the population had increased also.

Mr. Rynard: Well, Mr. Speaker, if it has increased, what is the problem? We added on an extra \$9 which brought up the pension to \$55 a month. What is the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) trying to say.

Mr. Mahoney: You did not give them another increase in six years.

Mr. Rynard: Yes, we did. The hon. member should do his homework. The Conservative party immediately

Old Age Security Act

raised the pension. The gross national product today is three times what it was then. What about the great record of the Liberal party to which the minister referred? The pension is not universal now. The Liberals have deserted the guidelines of their forefathers. The pensioners will take a long look at the last four years, and the so-called just society which had denied them their rights. They have been denied the rights they paid for through income tax in the amount of \$961 million in 1971, \$700 million in federal sales tax and \$250 million from the 3 per cent corporation tax. They have been denied what is their right.

I wonder whether the minister recalls that it was through the efforts of the right hon. member for Prince Albert that Mr. Pearson was urged to keep his election promise made in 1963 to increase the pension by \$10. But that was not a gift either, because very shortly after that there was an amendment to the Income Tax Act which brought up the tax another one per cent for old age pensioners to match the \$10. Therefore, they received nothing. Then, the minister refers to the income supplement of \$105 per month, with an escalator clause of 2 per cent. If the cost of living did not rise by 2 per cent not a nickel would be given to the pensioners. What a deal! The minister boasts about it being a first, but he forgets that his government had another first. No government previously had deliberately set out to cause unemployment in order to control runaway inflation. We have more unemployment than ever before and inflation is still with us. Why was he so miserly with that first provision about which he boasts? The senior citizens have been made to scrape the bottom of the barrel because of a 7 per cent increase in the price of food, shelter and clothing.

Let us not boast of arrogance and unfairness to our senior citizens. We pleaded with the minister to tie the increase to the cost of living. The old age pensioners pleaded with him. Their sons and daughters, who were the heaviest taxed in history and who had more deductions from their payroll than any other generation in history, pleaded with him, as they themselves found inflation eroding their dollar until it was hard to make ends meet and do anything for their parents. The government boasts about lowering the pension age to 65. What a mess the minister would have been in today had he not done so in view of the rampant unemployment.

Then, the minister goes on to talk about the \$30 per month guaranteed income supplement that was introduced in 1966. This only went to the old age pensioners and senior citizens who had nothing else on which to live. The minister forgot to state that of every dollar earned, the government took 50 per cent in tax. He forgot to state that the \$75 old age security pension which the government froze at \$80, with the inflation we have had, today would be around \$90. He starts off at January 1, 1972 still gypping the old age pensioner by \$9.85 per month or \$118.20 per year, if my mathematics are correct.

The minister speaks about what he is doing to relieve the problem senior citizens face in the field of housing. Well, I wish to dwell on that for a minute. Before I do so, however, I should like to refer again to the change in the guaranteed income supplement. It will be of no benefit to Canada's veterans who are in receipt of the guaranteed