

everybody else on low pensions, he is the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. Yet when it was pointed out to the minister that the 510,000 old age pensioners who will lose this supplement were still in the poverty bracket, he just did not believe it until the member proved it with figures from the government's own white paper. The minister had spoken with approval of the fact that, by cutting off the 2 per cent escalator from the people who would not get the supplement, the government this year would save \$15 million and by 1975 would save \$100 million in handling old age pensions. In other words, they would use this money to help finance the really destitute among old age pensioners.

No wonder my colleague referred to this as the rationing of old age poverty. It is exactly that. It is simply saying to the whole group of old age pensioners and elderly people in this country at age 65, "We are not going to go near the people who have the real money in this country in order to help finance a pension in line with the cost of living; we are going to get the money from those of you who are better fixed in order to meet the needs of the completely destitute." That is what the government is saying. As a matter of fact, the minister spoke with pride as though he were a Robin Hood robbing the rich to help the poor, instead of a comfortably insulated cabinet minister compelling poor old age pensioners to finance those who are even poorer.

Why not get this money from the rich? Something else that happened yesterday struck me vividly. When this suggestion was made to the minister I remember the sort of hopeless shrug he gave. He probably has been keeping track of what has been happening to the white paper on taxation. We know the response the white paper on tax reform has invoked. Rich corporations and better off groups of citizens have come here and utterly refused to accept a fair taxation system for this country. I am glad the minister has returned to the House. I am sorry he did not have the intestinal fortitude to say, "We are going to bring in a good pension, a modern pension, that will allow the older people of this country to live decently, and we are not going to do that by taxing other old age pensioners. We shall tax those people who are capable of bearing on their shoulders those who have given of their best to this country."

• (3:20 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. MacInnis: I wish he had done that. In many ways the minister is courageous, but I suspect that in this case he allowed himself to be dominated either by other members of the cabinet. I see that he shook his head when I mentioned the cabinet. Well, certain sections of the public must have influenced him. I do not know which is worse, being dominated by the cabinet or by the public.

Mr. Lewis: The minister shook his head because he was in pain.

Mrs. MacInnis: Maybe he has a headache.

Old Age Security Act

Mr. Lewis: Perhaps he was not suffering very much before this.

Mrs. MacInnis: If he has a headache now, I can only say that it will get much worse when the elderly people of this country find out what is being done to them not for them, but to them. Perhaps the elderly did not organize too well in times gone by; but I predict that they will organize now, and they will have the support of other sections of the community which know what a very mean and dastardly thing has been done to these pensioners.

An hon. Member: Oh, no.

Mrs. MacInnis: Another thing that surprises me about the minister is this. One of his reasons for denying the 510,000 people involved the benefit of the 2 per cent escalator clause is that he believes the cost of living will not go up this year. What on earth gives him that idea, I do not know.

Mr. Gilbert: He must be on drugs.

Mrs. MacInnis: I do not know what kind of drugs he is on, but I suspect he became intoxicated with his own rhetoric yesterday. I see no other reason for his attitude. As Senator Croll and others have ascertained, the cost of living in the last two years has gone up 8 per cent. But suddenly the minister predicts that those increases are all in the past, and that living costs will not rise this year. Why should they not, particularly since just a day or two ago the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission decided to forego moral suasion. The commission, which has been the tool the government has used to persuade the rich and suggest economic controls for the poor, has given up any hope of persuading the rich to keep the cost of living within bounds. The commission cannot do that, as we said from the beginning. Until such time as we put all incomes into the pot and determine the proper relationship between different kinds of incomes, we shall not be able to control the cost of living.

One of the bad features of this bill to which we have drawn attention, and I think this is very bad, is this. It will divide old age pensioners into two groups. One group will be compelled to finance the other, and I think that is very bad.

Mr. Munro: Would the hon. member permit a question, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. MacInnis: Go ahead.

Mr. Munro: I was wondering whether you are one of those in the NDP who advocates the guaranteed annual income?

Mrs. MacInnis: Yes.

Mr. Munro: Then, do you feel that there is—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The minister has permission to ask a question, but he ought to direct it to the Chair.