

*The Address—Mr. Knowles*

below which none of our people should be permitted to fall. We have tried to approach this ideal by establishing minimum wages and fair wage rates. We have tried to approach it by our social security legislation. But I believe the next step in this field has got to be an actual guarantee of a minimum total income for everyone.

I invite those members who may not have already done so to read the literature on this subject written by experts in the social welfare field, by sociologists and others who are telling us that this is the next step in social welfare, particularly in an affluent society, a society which is moving at a great pace in the direction of automation.

There are various ways to consider this proposition. We could increase the number of goods and services provided for our people—education is an example—on what is sometimes called a free basis. There is also the whole question of looking at the income tax structure and deciding whether, having arrived at a level of income below which people should not pay tax, people below that level should get something out of the tax funds so that the incomes of all our people are brought up to a minimum below which no one should be allowed to fall.

We hear talk sometimes about other parties taking some of the planks out of our platform and leaving nothing for us. We would be quite happy if they would do that and really act on them; and we would suggest that if they want to look for an area in which to do real work and establish justice and security for all our people, this is the next and now terribly important step, namely a guaranteed level of income below which none of our people should be allowed to fall.

I now want to say something, Mr. Speaker, about the position of the members of this house in relation to the kind of vote which will be taken at a quarter to six this afternoon, and in relation to any other votes which will be taken during the course of the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. We intend this afternoon to vote for my leader's amendment calling for old age security to be paid immediately at age 65; and we intend to vote on Tuesday night for the amendment that calls for old age security to be raised to \$100 a month. In casting these votes, Mr. Speaker, we are not voting for an election. We are not saying that dissolution must necessarily follow. We are voting for what the words say, a pension of \$100 a month at age 65.

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If anyone wants to bring before parliament at any time the issue of an election, the issue of dissolution, and if it stands by itself, we will take our stand on this issue. But, Mr. Speaker, we think it is sheer and utter nonsense for 265 grown men and women to come here to decide the issues of this country and to be told that there are times without number when we cannot separate two things, that we must be caught on the horns of a dilemma. Most hon. members in the house are aware of the fact that I find recreation not in reading James Bond but in reading Beauchesne, Bourinot and other tomes in the library, which are really much more interesting, and much more exciting. I have, in fact, done a little reading on this very question. The reading I have done makes the kind of thing I hear and read on the radio and in the press about the present situation sound like so much nonsense. I suggest that the radio and the press are joining with others in helping to keep alive the notion that every time an opposition party moves an amendment on a specific subject it is threatening the country with an election. That is what we are hearing about the amendments now before the house.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Let us look at some of the facts and statistics. There are only three occasions in the history of this Canadian parliament upon which an election has been asked as a result of an adverse vote in parliament—just three occasions in 99 years. One of them was in 1963 and the other two were in 1926. The first occasion in 1926 was when Mr. King's government had met with an adverse vote on an amendment and when a vote on the Speaker's ruling had also gone against the government's wishes. Mr. King asked for a dissolution. We all know that this request was refused by the Governor General of that day. A few days later the Meighen government was beaten on the floor of parliament by the passing of a motion of censure introduced by the Liberals of that day. As a result, dissolution was requested and granted and an election was held. The other occasion was in February, 1963, when the Diefenbaker government was beaten on an amendment to a supply motion, whereupon dissolution was requested and an election was held. But that is all. Those are the only three occasions in Canadian history when an adverse vote resulted even in a request for a dissolution of parliament.