

Pensions Act

What I think has been sad this year is that we have had to hammer away at the government, first to introduce the \$10 increase for old age security and now to get these three \$10 increases in these shared programs. We have had to hammer at the government to carry out its own commitment for the Canada pension plan, and the best we can get from the government is that it will be delayed and brought in next year rather than this. This government is the one which said, at election time, it was ready to move, it had its plan and was ready to give the people a new look in the social security field.

I do not blame the minister for saying today that this legislation would bring added security and comfort to those who will receive the increases being provided. However, it really is not very much. It really is not anything for us to boast about in the affluence of our society today that people who have played their part in the economic and social life of our country at age 65 can now get \$75 a month if they are single and \$150 a month for a married couple, with the right to have other income of \$30 a month if they are single and \$35 per month for married couples. Well, it is \$10 better than it was before this legislation was introduced but it is hardly security and comfort in the accepted meaning of those words.

But, Mr. Speaker, we can move a long way in this field. We have the economic capacity to do it in a country such as Canada. I believe we have the intellectual capacity. I think we have the knowledge in the field of social welfare measures to sort these things out and to get an over-all plan to deal with all the needs of our people. I know the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss LaMarsh) has had some tough battles. She has had to fight the insurance companies.

Miss LaMarsh: Who, me?

Mr. Knowles: I missed that.

Miss LaMarsh: Who, me?

Mr. Knowles: Apparently the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) has now said the same thing about the insurance companies as the Minister of National Health and Welfare said. I am surprised that so many people have risen in this house, as if the insurance companies need to be defended. I think they manage to look after themselves very well.

As I started to say, I know the minister has had a fight with the insurance companies. I gather from reading a magazine such as *Maclean's*, which knows what goes on within the Liberal party, that she has had a fight with some of her own cabinet colleagues in this field. I know there is a job of education to do in this country. I submit she not only

[**Mr. Knowles.**]

has a tremendous job but she has a tremendous opportunity. If, with the help of the expert people she has in her department, and with the support of a parliament that now believes in social security, she will give a lead in the effort to achieve, not just piecemeal amending of these bits of legislation when pressure comes from the opposition, but to achieve an over-all Canada pension plan, plus a social security plan to meet all the needs of our people, including old age assistance, income in time of illness, provision for widows and survivors, orphans and the disabled, she will do well for the people of Canada. Such an effort could be made with the financial capacity and intellectual capacity that we have in this field.

One of the things that has grown concurrently with our branching out in social security legislation, such as has taken place in the last couple of generations, has been the growth of organizations like the Canada welfare council and the increase in the number of people who are studying social work in our various universities. There is now quite a band of such people. I will not name any of them because it would be unfair to name only some and not others, but there is quite a band of experts in this field.

I am sure the minister has made many more contacts with these people than she ever did previously. I am also sure that if these experts were drawn in and put to work, then before we reach the point when there is another round of increases for items a, b, c and d, we could have an over-all approach to the problem of social security.

I would like to repeat what I said earlier. This is legislation we heartily welcome. We hope, despite the interest hon. members will want to show in it, the house will pass it quickly and the benefit will get through to the people it is intended to cover.

One of the things which disturbed us quite a bit after the \$10 increase was given in old age security was to learn that in certain provinces some people got the \$10 in one hand and had it taken away, either in whole or in part, from the other hand. We hope that will not happen with this legislation. We asked for this legislation; we welcome it; we support it. But we hope that before the ink can dry on the bill when it is printed as finally passed, the minister will enter upon the hard work of drafting an over-all social security program, jointly between the federal government and the provinces, so that we can meet in an honest, intelligent way the social needs of our people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Marcoux (Quebec-Montmorency): I only wish to say a few words in support of