

Old Age Security

There is also the question of family allowances that are administered by the federal government. I submit that the government moved last April and made plans for increasing the basic amount of family allowances over and above whatever adjustment was required for the consumer price index. At present we are making sure that there will not be any long delay between when an increase in the consumer price index takes place and when there will be an increase in actual pensions. As I said, by reducing this delay to two months the government has gone as far as it can go sensibly and realistically in the administration of the plan. The issue that members of the opposition, including the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, are raising is a totally different one. It has nothing to do with the consumer price index itself. This is taking care of increases in the cost of living.

The other argument was whether, in view of all the other demands being made on government expenditures in the social field, the next step should be another substantial increase in the allocation of funds to senior citizens. I am sure we can always find that what is being done is not sufficient. A few months ago the hon. member was recommending a basic pension of \$150 a month. Now his party has gone to \$200 a month, to catch up with the Social Credit party. I am sure that the Social Credit party before long will advocate \$250 per month. I do not want to embark on that race.

I think I have answered the point raised by the hon. member. His point had nothing to do with the consumer price index. That is another argument.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, may I ask one more question, after which I shall yield to the hon. member for Témiscamingue. I recognize that the minister does not want to be involved in the race, as he says, between us and my hon. friends opposite. On the other hand, surely he does not need to lag so far behind.

My other question is this. I assume that, like all of us in this place, he saw the front page of the *Globe and Mail* this morning. That newspaper is a sort of daily bible here. It carried a story about the government having a \$500 million surplus that it had not counted on. According to the story, only \$290 million has been taken up. Did not the minister try to get some of the other \$210 million for a further increase in the old age pension?

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Chairman, I read the *Globe and Mail*, but do not trust it.

● (1640)

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Chairman, I shall not take up much of the time of the House but I should like to clarify a few points. A while ago, my colleague for the riding of Shefford (Mr. Rondeau) quoted facts concerning Statistics Canada which dealt with the percentages, 3, 5 and 5.3 per cent, etc. I think the government should order Statistics Canada not to make its surveys, for instance, in the field of prices, the day after Christmas or Easter because then there are special sales right across the country; instead, surveys should be made throughout the year. The same goes for unemployment in Canada. If we count the unemployed before Christmas or Easter, clearly

[Mr. Lalonde.]

there will be more before than after. Statistics Canada does seem to play the game of the government.

Now, Mr. Chairman, about Bill C-219, which provides that senior citizens can look forward to receiving \$179.16 in October instead of \$170.14 and that a couple where both spouses qualify for maximum benefits will see their monthly payments grow from \$324.60 to \$341.80.

Yesterday, the leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Lewis) talked about the advantages of having a minority government, saying that the New Democratic Party had asked for these things, that the NDP had asked for higher pensions, but he forgot to say that when we moved motions in the House to bring down the pension age to 60, to have the pension paid to the spouse, even if he or she had not reached 65, all members of the New Democratic Party voted against these motions. When we moved a motion to grant a pension of \$200 a month to a single person and \$350 to a married couple, the New Democratic Party voted against this motion. Today, they tell us: It is the New Democratic Party which asked for higher pensions.

An hon. Member: Whited sepulchers!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Whited sepulchers, that is the right word.

Mr. Chairman, that is what they say, but yesterday, as we can read on page 6272 of *Hansard*, the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen), who was talking about the intellectual honesty of the members of the New Democratic Party, the socialist members, said, and I quote:

The NDP is different when it forms a government from when it is in opposition. We have heard the NDP talk about \$400 a month, but what does the NDP government give when it is in power in certain provinces? In British Columbia they suggest \$250 a month is enough. In Manitoba it is \$242 a month. In Saskatchewan it is \$219, plus a 5 per cent increase announced in August which takes it to \$230 a month. What is the highest figure in one of the richest provinces, British Columbia, where most of the money to be spent was raised by the Social Credit Party?

The NDP boasts of having increased pensions in British Columbia with the money left to it by the Social Credit when it came in power.

—\$250 a month. Half of that amount comes from the federal treasury.

Moreover, \$125 a month come from— they have run away, Mr. Chairman. They cannot face the facts.

Mr. Chairman, they do not boast of having voted against all our motions. That is not all. In 1962—and I refer to the Liberals to whom I will give a dressing-down by the way—in 1962, during our electoral campaign throughout the country but more specifically in Quebec, the old age pensions amounted to \$65 a month.

An hon. Member: True or not!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): We asked for \$100 a month. The Liberals were laughing at us.

An hon. Member: They found it funny!

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): It was funny! It could lead to inflation. The old people who were only receiving