

money one receives in the form of retirement pensions, earnings, interest, dividends, rents, etc.

A review of the history of universal old age security and guaranteed income supplement payments indicates that universal old age security payment replaced needs-tested payment. The guaranteed income supplement has been introduced. The escalation formula has been introduced for the OAS and GIS. A special GIS rate for married couples has been introduced, and full cost of living escalation has been introduced for OAS and GIS, with henceforth quarterly escalation.

It is interesting to note that over 1,800,000 persons are presently receiving old age security payments in Canada. Of this total 576,000 receive partial benefits under the guaranteed income supplement plan, and some 478,000 receive the full benefit of the guaranteed income supplement.

The cost to the taxpayer of old age security in the year 1972-73 is \$1,786 million, and the guaranteed income supplement adds another \$739 million, for a total of over \$2½ billion. In 1973-74 the estimate for old age security is \$2,203 million, and for the guaranteed income supplement \$750 million, making a total of almost \$3 billion. This represents something like 15 per cent of the total federal tax load, and if related to personal income is something in the order of 50 cents on every dollar of federal personal income tax.

Not only has the government given Canadian senior citizens improved financial security through the most generous old age security plan in the world, both in terms of benefits and eligibility, but the energy and creativity of so many of our older people are also being rewarded through the New Horizons program which is administered by the Department of National Health and Welfare.

It has met with overwhelming acceptance by retired citizens as a means of helping themselves remain active in our country's activities and provide a service for their peers who for some reason are cut off from the mainstream of Canadian life. By the end of this month the program will have provided funds totalling more than \$7 million for just over 1,100 projects in its ten months of operation, and by the end of this year we can expect to have added to that a further \$2.3 million in funding.

This, Mr. Speaker, will be the second time this year that the government has increased the old age security pension. Last April it was raised to \$100 a month from its previous level of \$82.88. In May of 1972 the 2 per cent ceiling on escalation was removed, and full automatic escalation was extended to both the guaranteed income supplement and the old age security pension.

In the period since 1967 when the GIS was first paid the combined pension has risen from \$105 to \$179.16 for a single person, or from \$210 to \$341.80 for a married pensioner couple.

I am disappointed that the parties in this House were not able to reach agreement on an early termination of this debate. Mr. Speaker, we believe that Bill C-219 deserves and, it is to be hoped, will soon receive unanimous support.

Old Age Security

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, without any personal preliminary comments, I would like to offer my most sincere contribution to the fight against inflation, unemployment and poverty, in the present and normal framework of our monetary, economic and political systems of free enterprise as they exist and operate today in Canada.

I will give immediately the basic principle underlining the global view I want to give of the present situation of our national economy in 1973 and of a slightly different way of checking the economic, national, personal, familial or social imbalance which affects all of us through the well known problems of inflation, unemployment and poverty. This basic principle is as follows: the same monetary, economic and political systems which make possible such a magnificent national production of over \$114 billion in 1973, that is an average of \$5,000 per citizen, or \$25,000 per family of 5 persons, could also allow us to legislate in such a way as to distribute in a more adequate fashion these resources amongst the persons, the families and the business enterprises which make up our country.

This basic principle is translated into a practical technique, in a recognized down to earth formula which is called "merchandizing". All businessmen, producers, real producers, produce not for production sake but for consumption, for the distribution of their production, for the needs of their customers capable of paying the going price. With this basic principle, this practical technique there is every chance to attain the goals chosen instead of letting ourselves be carried by chance, tradition, conservatism, superficial, patchwork, slap-dash methods inspired by intellectual or mental anemia. Having clarified the basic principle and practical technique which guide me, I trust my explanation will serve as a basis in judging the relative value of my way of understanding and remedying the present economic situation, and that of the government as expressed by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and contained in the bills now being put before us supposedly to check inflation.

Please note, however, that according to me it is not enough to check inflation, unemployment and poverty; we must, above all, correct the situation and restore permanently the national economic balance between individuals, families and business enterprises of all sorts.

The national economic imbalance of inflation, unemployment and poverty which affect all strata of society is not the result of chance, but that of the legislative measures passed by the 264 Canadian ministers and members of Parliament elected by the people. They alone have the right to vote in Parliament for the passage of bills on the distribution of income and taxes among individuals, families and business enterprises.

If production in Canada, in 1973, reaches \$114 billion or \$5,000 per capita, Canada will rank amongst the richest nations in the world. We can see that all our economic ills are but the result of a poor distribution of the extraordinary production amongst all Canadians, each one of whom has the right to live.