

the old age security pension at 60 is the perfect answer to an objective that not only the Liberals but all Canadians have at heart, that is a just society. So if we really aim at achieving this just society, I think that today is the time to improve the bill now before us.

Before introducing my amendment, in case this is necessary, Mr. Speaker, I should like to call immediately on the procedure experts of the opposition parties in order that it may be put. But, above all, let them not tell me that this would be delaying the implementation of this bill. It is common knowledge that the minister will always be able to make the bill effective as of April 1.

I believe that the argument brought forward by some hon. members last night that delaying passage of the bill means depriving senior citizens of an increase in benefits is absurd. We are quite aware that we can review the bill, that we should review it, and that providing old age security at age 60 would have tremendous consequences in our society, restoring a favourable social climate. Everyone knows that, the majority of hon. members are certain of it. Yet, it is a matter of a billion dollars.

I said last night and I repeat for the benefit of those who were not here, this billion dollars required for the provision of old age security at 60 would be compensated by the thousands of job opportunities for the young unemployed whom we are spoiling rotten by way of an ever increasing number of social measures.

Let us put things straight, let us give holidays to those who deserve them, and a job to those who are able to work in order to build up a much more flourishing Canada.

Once more, I suggest that this solution is much better than all the inventions the government has been trying over the last five years. We are well aware of the numerous injections which have been made in the economy, of the efforts which have been made. All these efforts have resulted in failure as regards unemployment and inflation. We suggest today—and I say “we” because I know that I will be seconded and have support—an amendment in order to reach a solution which might greatly reduce unemployment, which is the plague of this country. This solution might bring happiness for thousands of Canadians to whom we are responsible.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Champlain, that Bill C-147, an Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be not now read a third time, but that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs in order that the minister responsible may appear again before the said committee for the purpose of amending the bill in such a way that it may better meet the needs of the people of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I might make a few comments before reading the motion moved by the hon. member.

Of course, I understand that the Chair is not supposed to determine the steps that might be taken by the committee, but it still experiences some difficulty to determine what action the committee might take, in view of the recommendation tacked on to the motion and also in view of the very specific proposals included in the bill.

However, with regard to the amendment, the Chair can hardly refuse it even if from a procedural point of view it seems to be a nonentity, knowing in advance that it must

Old Age Security Act

be difficult, even if the House decided to accept the motion of the hon. member, despite the presence of the minister in committee, to allow the committee to amend the bill one way or another, unless this were to reduce the amount of the pensions.

At any rate, I intend to accept the amendment in its present form and I will put it to the House.

Mr. La Salle, seconded by Mr. Matte, moves:

That Bill C-147, an Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be not now read a third time, but that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs in order that the minister responsible may appear again before the said committee for the purpose of amending the bill in such a way that it may better meet the needs of the people of Canada.

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, do you accept my amendment?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Yes.

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-147 may be considered as an interesting measure because it concerns quite a number of Canadians who have proved their eagerness at work and who have helped to make our country what it is today.

It must be recognized that the people concerned in Bill C-147 are not responsible for the increase in the cost of living. I also feel that it would be proper for them to benefit from a larger part of the Canadian production which increases each year.

Referring to the figures quoted by the Senate committee of inquiry on poverty, one finds that those who made \$1,944 or less a year in 1970 lived in deprivation and poverty.

Today, by moving and passing Bill C-147 we will spare the old people hardships and we will place them on the threshold of poverty, on condition, however, that the two spouses are eligible for the pension and the guaranteed income supplement. Otherwise, married couples with only one eligible spouse or ineligible on account of their age will have to go on living in anguish, torment and hardships of all kinds.

As for couples with only one eligible spouse, as I have said, they will keep on depriving themselves since the social allowances doled out by Quebec are governed by quite unrealistic criteria.

Mr. Lachance: Mr. Speaker, I am raising a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The hon. member for Lafontaine is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Lachance: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the hon. member speaking on this bill. However, it seems to me that a motion has been moved and that it should now be discussed. And if nobody has anything to say about it, I think it should be put to the vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I understand the concern of the hon. member for Lafontaine, but I really think that the hon. member for Portneuf was not straying too far from the subject of the bill, or at any rate was coming back to it. I do not think hon. members can be restricted to the matter of the bill's referral to committee.