

There are two principles contained in this bill. The first is the theory of selectivity. Whether we are proposing social welfare programs, old age security legislation or other like measures, we cannot give to all the people the things that they want because the economy would not tolerate it. Therefore we have to be selective. We have to tell those who do receive these special guaranteed supplements: "You will be entitled to receive \$151 or \$153 a month because you have to live and we will not see you starving to death".

On the other side of the coin, we have to say to those that receive \$500 a month: "You will get \$80 a month and no more. If we give you more we cannot give more to others, unless of course we take it from you". And so we have the same vicious circle. We have to come to some sensible conclusions, and this is one of them. I shall not deal with some of the other matters but will leave them up to the other speakers. However, I wish to say that this is indeed a liberal bill. I hope that in the committee all these questions will be explained. I am pretty sure they will be. I refer to the date of April 1, 1971 as the cutoff date and these other points. I am sure these things will be explained in the committee when we sit down with the administrators and the other people who have the facts and figures. Then, we will be in a position to make common-sense suggestions and accept common-sense arguments. In the main, I would ask the support of this House for the bill because we are treading on a path which will not be a popular one and I believe every member here should know it will not be popular. I do not think the opposition, merely for political purposes, should take advantage of something that has to be done.

• (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to the hon. member for York East (Mr. Otto). He is always very interesting, and at times he is amusing. He usually has a wealth of figures and a good imagination. I pay tribute to him for all these reasons. I have sat with him as a member on committees. I have always enjoyed being on those committees with him. I hope we will both be members of this committee because I am sure when he manipulates figures I will try to have something to say. I do not hold that against him. He has a new Liberal policy. Is it the just society one? The Liberal policy of the past, as suggested by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), just does not fit in with his philosophy.

May I say I am very glad the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) finally made a move. I am sure he must be acutely aware of the things he has left undone and the damage and shortcomings of some of the things he proposes. As the hon. member for York East said, there will be some repercussions in respect of some of the provisions that are being introduced. I congratulate the minister for what he has done and I hope I am, at least partially, cognizant of the difficulties governments face in introducing bills, in finding the necessary funds and in accepting responsibility for what they do.

I shall chastise the minister for the bad things he has done and the things he has left undone. There is much he

Old Age Security Act

has left undone. It is certainly not a magnanimous measure. Subtly, the minister tried to leave the impression he was giving a lot when in reality he was taking something away. Robin Hood at his best could not have done better. In an interesting article the *Toronto Daily Star* mentions this under the heading "Munro initiatives help the poor". The article reads:

It was his Robin Hood costume. If his government brings in legislation—as it should, promptly—to implement the social security white paper tabled yesterday, it will be asking Parliament to take from the rich and give to the poor on a scale never matched in Sherwood Forest.

Well, it is quite a compliment to him that he could outdo Robin Hood whose legend has lived through the ages. The minister did not go further because the realities of the misnamed just society did not allow him to do so. After all, the just society has not operated the way the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) had pictured it. His prescience has not worked. His surplus vanished and he was out a few million dollars more in his calculations. This is not unusual for this minister.

Perhaps the Minister of Finance remembers the wise old axiom that the plans of mice and men oft go astray. I suggest to the hon. member for York East that if his figures are no better, he should be very careful before the committee. What is the reason for the delay in relieving the humiliation of the old people and their difficulties in life? Nothing is to be done before April 1. Santa Claus just did not come. To give the minister credit I admit that he did his best to try to gild the lily, but quickly this will disappear when cold reality sets in. Those promises of things to come might never materialize. This is merely a white paper, a feeler to test the water. We hope it is that because then perhaps some of the things in it can be changed. Perhaps we can give the Liberals a shot in the arm by redirecting them on the right course. What about the poor old age pensioner? He needs bread and the government gives him cake—shades of Marie Antoinette. It will be a sparse Christmas for many people who will not believe this government could not have made arrangements for the increase to become available before the year's end. The approach to poverty is becoming a hodge-podge of municipal provincial and federal welfare boards with duplications and over-lapping. Often times no one receives help because the help is buried in bureaucracy.

It was interesting and sad to learn last evening that the Department of Health and Welfare has been sending out papers to addresses which had been changed five years previously, or even longer, and to non-existent places. Perhaps some of these people had passed away. However, this is government, this is bureaucracy, and perhaps this type of thing just cannot be helped, but surely to goodness they should try to do something about it. The approach to poverty, as I have said is becoming a hodge-podge of welfare boards. Let us take the case of the old age security pension. The recipient pays for it. The amount now is 4 per cent. Why is it said that the old people who are over age 65 do not deserve it. Surely, these people have been paying for it over the years through taxation. An amount of 4 per cent has been