

Supply—Health and Welfare

at this moment an opportunity of discussing ways and means of how this financing can be adequately arranged.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Chairman, I have no desire whatsoever to be out of harmony but I will make this point. If somebody had suggested that in order to obtain the needed money we increase the sales tax on some commodities, it would have been looked upon as being utterly in order for us to talk about that matter for probably three or four hours.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Blackmore: Oh, yes. No question at all would have been raised. The point raised by the hon. member for Fort William was a matter of financing. I imagine he could have gone on dealing with that matter for 15 minutes without being called to order. While I am perfectly ready to agree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman, and to do just as you say, I contend that on this particular topic the enforcement of that rule means that we turn this parliament into an afternoon debating society absolutely helpless to deal with the problem which we are discussing. I shall therefore be obliged to leave the matter up to you. But I will go on to say that if I could have just another two or three minutes to show how that scrip worked, I do not think it would be infringing greatly. It would not take very long.

Mr. McIvor: Order.

Mr. Blackmore: If I might continue, H. S. Allan and Company would have probably had \$500 worth of scrip printed by some company and he would use the units of scrip to buy butter, eggs, poultry, boots, various vegetables, various grains, firewood and all manner of things that were produced by the community, and people could go in there with that scrip and buy out of the store what things they needed, including even home-made socks, bootees, home-made clothes and all things which the community produced; and the community was able to produce a wide variety of commodities in those days because they still were able for instance to make yarn out of the raw wool and to knit that yarn into clothing and so on. So, there was relatively a very extensive field for the use of that scrip. They went on with great success. There were units of that scrip which were in circulation, I will wager, for a year and a half. People did not hesitate for a minute to take that scrip for their eggs or butter or any other commodity they turned in. People did not hesitate a minute to accept scrip in payment for articles, for labour, one to another. It functioned just as well as Canadian dollar bills.

Now, my suggestion is that an organization could be set up in every city and town of any considerable size in this country, having anything like a wide range of productive potential, which would enable old age pensioners to be paid the extra portion of their old age pension in scrip with which they could buy commodities being produced all around the area. In this way I feel positive that, having the co-operation of the dominion and provincial government, as well as the local municipalities, we could find a solution not only to the question of giving our old age pensioners what they ought to have, but also the problem of giving our blind all they need as well as all other underprivileged in the nation a chance to participate more adequately in the productive capacity of the country. There would be a much greater production of butter, fruits, vegetables and of other commodities because of the possibility of selling those commodities for scrip. Now, in substance, that is the gist of my message. Unless there is something that I have not been able to determine I will assure the house that this system can work in every province of this nation with the greatest advantage and with tremendous savings to the taxpayers of the country.

Now, that is in substance the message I wish to convey. I should like now, for just a moment, and I am sure there will be no objection on anybody's part, to list again those needs of ordinary old age pensioners as the Winnipeg council enumerated them. The first is rent, \$20 a month. I am quite positive that in no city in Canada can a person obtain a room that is fit even to house swine for less than \$5 per week. That is pretty well settled. A person is extremely fortunate if he can get a room for \$5, heated and with light and all the other things which are necessary. Then, there is food, \$30 per month. Let every hon. member in this house just contemplate what the effect upon him would be if he could spend no more than \$1 a day for food. That is a very serious thing to think about, especially if he had to eat in restaurants or other public eating places. What chance would he possibly have of nourishing himself adequately on a dollar a day? Even if he engaged in light house-keeping and cooked his own food, he would have the costs of cooking to take into account, like fuel.

The next item is clothing, \$10 a month. Perhaps a person could clothe himself on less than that; I do not contend about that. Then, you come to church, \$2. Is there any conceivable reason why a person who has been a faithful churchgoer and who desires to contribute to the upkeep of his church,