

today from a married couple in my riding. They tell me that they hope that in 1971 people will qualify for the old age pension at 60 since at 48 or 50 they can no longer work. They are too old to get a job.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunately true! It quite often happens that people lose jobs that they have held for 20 or 30 years, get fired because of mechanization. They are not responsible for mechanization but since machines are more and more replacing men, automatically those people who had jobs find themselves without an income and are unable to support themselves. When they go looking for another job they are simply asked the question: "How old are you?" "I am 50, I am 52, I am 55." They then get the following reply: "You are too old to work here." Then they are too old to work for industry and too young to get the old age security pension and they find themselves in a very difficult situation.

A few years back, when we were advocating that the pensionable age be brought down from 70 to 65 years, we were considered people with too advanced ideas. It was not normal that the eligibility age for the pension be brought down, because it did not reflect the thinking of those who were responsible for the administration.

Now, in some provinces which I will not name, provincial governments moved to ensure a little more security to senior citizens, and they started to give them a form of pension which could supplement that given by the central government, and at a less advanced age, namely at 65.

After a few years, the central government came to the conclusion that it was normal to bring the eligibility age for the pension down to 65, and that has been accepted by the whole population and by all hon. members.

In my opinion, it would be desirable in 1970 to bring down to 60 the eligibility age for the old age pension, so that young people who come each year on the labour market could let society take advantage of their knowledge. Indeed, they are in a better position than older people to render services to society and society would benefit from it if those young people took the place of older people and if persons 60 and over were allowed to leave their jobs and at the same time be assured of their security for the remaining years of their life.

● (9:30 p.m.)

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that mankind, and especially members, should remember: man does not change. It is easier for an elderly person to remain idle, without being subject to all kinds of whims and wishes, than for a younger person.

A youngblood is dynamic and if time is not spent on doing good things, energy will be consumed on not-so-good things.

As for senior citizens, they have matured and learned to be more deliberate. They can quietly and without fearing for their fate remain inactive and our society will not be the worse off.

Old Age Security Act

There remains one point to which I should like to draw the attention of the House. Even at 60 years of age, all the inhabitants of our towns or cities who are not completely worn out by work could keep busy beautifying properties.

In my riding, I have known people to whom I suggested that they leave their farm to their sons before the latter took off to go and live in town. I suggested that they buy a property and take care of it to brighten up the village and make it attractive for those who visited it or lived there.

I could give many instances of people who have taken our advice and who are now happy to live in an environment where they are not inactive but give to others the will to be of service in their milieu, to keep their home in order, with a small garden and flowers; they are an example for our youth; they show that everybody can lead a meaningful life, whatever his age.

It would be wise to alter this old age security legislation in some way so as to give our senior citizens an income which would not be partially taken away by taxes which actually prevent them from satisfying their needs.

I agree with the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) to whom I listened attentively a few moments ago and who said that Canadians should not have to pay tax on an income of less than \$3,000. In fact, if one considers the cost of maintaining a home and leading a decent life in 1970 this amount of \$3,000 is far from excessive.

Secondly, people who must live in homes for the aged should be able to live without having to depend on welfare. Every week I visit old people. I have the opportunity to go and say hello, to talk to them since I think it is my duty to do so. The sole comfort that many have is to be visited by a member of Parliament who is really going to look into their problems so as to get better acquainted with their situation and make the necessary representations.

Tomorrow when people see in their newspapers the representations made by some hon. members, including myself, some will say: The M.P.'s worried only about the old age security while young people have also needs. They will wonder how it is that they are being ignored.

In October 1970, during the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, we showed concern for young families when we proposed an amendment asking for an increase in family allowances in order to provide them with some additional income with which to fulfil their obligations.

Furthermore, in Canada, and particularly in Quebec, there are isolated people who may suffer because we neglect to speak on their behalf. I am referring to widows aged 60 or 65 who have family responsibilities and who need some income to carry out their obligations.

Those people write us from time to time, asking us to bear their plight in mind so that Canada may grant them