

*Supply*

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Would you go for \$150?

**Mr. Danson:** The amount must be significant and you can read anything you want from that statement. I am confident that the amount will be significant, but I must say that I have no prior knowledge.

In any event, we introduced the guaranteed income supplement and provided for a maximum payment of \$30 a month to old age pensioners having no other income. As in the case of old age security pensions, this was indexed, for cost of living purposes, at 2 per cent per year. In 1970, the maximum guaranteed income supplement was increased to \$55 a month, and this year the government both increased the maximum to \$70 per month and indexed the guaranteed income supplement payment to fully reflect increases in the cost of living.

Since 1963, therefore, under the combined headings of old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, Liberal governments have increased benefits payable to a single old age pensioner from \$65 a month to \$150 a month plus full cost of living adjustment if she or he has no other income. Several other benefits and programs, all of them introduced by Liberal governments, enabled retirees and senior citizens to look forward to a dignified life in old age.

**Mr. Woolliams:** We remember six-buck Harris.

**Mr. Danson:** We have come a long way since the six-buck days, and compared to the days of 10-buck Bob, I think this was very generous.

There is the Canada Pension Plan, for example, which was introduced in 1966 and will be fully operational by 1976. The plan will pay out a retirement benefit of 25 per cent of a worker's annual average earnings up to \$5,100, in addition to providing a disability pension, a benefit for dependents for those disabled and unable to work, a pension for widows, orphans and disabled workers, and a lump sum death benefit. This plan guarantees for the first time that pension benefits will be payable to all Canadian workers, over and above the old age security payment, regardless of the vagaries of coverage under private pension plans. In its white paper on income security, the government announced its intention of keeping the Canada Pension Plan consistent with the growth in wages and salaries in the Canadian economy.

There are also the medical care program and the Canada Assistance Plan, both initiated by Liberal governments. These are the first things we have done with a degree of consistency, if not with all the haste that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would want, and that many of us would wish. I think we are making considerable progress and the pace of it is accelerating. I think we can be grateful for that without, at the same time, ever being satisfied.

I suggest that we get on with the business of the House and with the legislation that is before us, because there are things to be done. There is good legislation and we are proud of the performance of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, a new member of the House, since he assumed that portfolio. I think all of those on this side of the House, and the people in Canada, can be grateful for

[Mr. Danson.]

having him serve in that role. I think we should get on with the job.

• (1500)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Caouette (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to deal at great length with the matter before us, because, after all, the supplementary estimates being discussed at the present time are highly justifiable.

Although one may criticize the purposes for which such estimates are earmarked or say that too much or too little money is provided, I find it quite ridiculous that the Progressive Conservative party should want to reduce some one dollar items. I sincerely believe that the members of that party would be the last to support such a proposal. In fact, their main purpose, and that is unfortunate, is to play politics. Their purpose is not to get good administration but rather to create confusion among others and achieve some political gains.

For my part, I only ask that the government have these items disposed of as soon as possible in order to be in a position to introduce adequate bills, and that not only for purely political purposes, but rather in consideration of the rights of the old people for whom those estimates are intended.

Mr. Speaker, is there anything to prevent the government from introducing such bills as soon as possible? The members of the Liberal party are keen to blame the Progressive Conservative members, telling them: You are delaying the business of the House, you do not want us to act quickly. This results in a deplorable waste of time because nothing more than motions or innocuous bills are put before the House.

As far as we are concerned, we are waiting for the government to take unequivocal positions, especially on old age security pensions. We can never pin them down about the amounts to be paid to the old people; they rather enjoy, every four or five years, introducing bills intended to create political pressures on individuals, instead of discussing the amount of the votes or the real solution to the problems.

I wonder why the government does not introduce bills stipulating, for instance, that the old age security pensions be increased to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living. Instead, it prefers to introduce the same old bills, postponing their adoption to introduce others later on, but refusing to take positive steps. In fact, the present budgets are another crushing proof that the governments, past and present, are incapable of setting up sensible estimates.

They still enjoy throwing figures around from time to time, but never taking into account concrete facts, that is the increase in the cost of living. For instance, the old people could be given the right to automatically higher pensions, based on rising costs.

Mr. Speaker, we are still discussing the supplementary estimates for the year ending March 31 and, as the hon. member for Winnipeg-North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said a while ago, we are waiting for the government to take a position and quickly. Decisions will not be made easier nor will the Canadian people live any better because