

The suggested amendment—and here I just put it forward for information without moving it—is as follows:

Bill C-147 is amended by adding thereto the following, as clause 4:

4. Immediately after section 10 of the said Act insert the following heading and section:

“Comfort Allowance 10A. (1) in this section,

“supervisory care” means a level of care required by a pensioner who needs room, board and laundry service and who, because of frailty due to normal aging, or to minor physical or mental disability, requires some supervision in the activities of daily living; and

“limited personal care” means a level of care required by a pensioner who is slowing down in his physical or mental faculties and therefore requires continuing supervision and some assistance with the activities of daily living.

These words have been borrowed from the report of the federal task force on this subject and that is where the definition comes from. But these definitions are only suggested so that the meat of it could apply. Then we have:

(2) A pensioner, single or married, who is resident in a home for the aged or other such institution and who is receiving supervisory care or limited personal care, and who is in receipt of the whole or any part of the supplement, shall retain for his personal use a comfort allowance of not less than thirty percent of the total of his pension plus the full supplement to which he is entitled.”

This would mean a maximum supplement or a maximum comfort allowance of \$51. I suggest to you that it is within the jurisdiction of Parliament to consider this, and I suggest to you that it is eminently fair and is something we certainly should consider.

The Deputy Chairman: I would like to make it abundantly clear for the record, Senator Argue, that you are putting this forward as a suggestion at this stage and not as a formal motion.

Senator Argue: Not at this point.

Mr. Cafik: Personally I am very sympathetic to the spirit of what you are trying to do in respect to this suggestion, but in my view it poses certain difficulties.

First of all, comfort allowances, as I have indicated previously, do not find themselves in the bill, and certainly there is no suggestion of comfort allowances in the amendments to the bill which we presently have in front of us. For that reason I do not know whether I should be allowed to discuss these things, and I am somewhat nervous in dealing with this kind of thing. However, it seems to me that the suggestion is outside the framework of the limited amendments we have in front of us, and I would have certain reservations as to its acceptability from that standpoint. But, of course, the committee can deal with that.

Secondly, I pointed out that comfort allowances are a provincial matter—the provinces establish them, and we pay half of the cost

under the Canada Assistance Plan—and therefore it would seem to me—and I do not want to get myself in trouble here—that the spirit of the thing you are trying to do is to take the increases in the Old Age Security Act and to deem them as non-income for any other calculations. It seems to me that that is really what you are talking about, because at the present time they are income and are taken in for payment of room and board, and so on, in whatever provincial institutions might be involved, rather than declaring something about comfort allowances which are outside the terms of this. That is one point.

Thirdly, I would argue that if you are to talk about a comfort allowance in the specific kind of way in which you are talking, then you are really talking about a money matter, a ways and means matter, that would involve additional expenditures by Parliament because we are committed under the Canada Pension Plan to pay part of any comfort allowance. But that is subject to some debate.

Senator Argue: This is the division I would suggest with respect to something that is being paid. This would not cost five cents, in my opinion, under this legislation. It is merely dividing what you are going to pay anyway, or merely attaching some particulars to a part of it.

Senator Smith: Just for the record, Mr. Chairman, I am sure that Mr. Cafik meant to cite the Canada Assistance Plan and not the pension plan.

Mr. Cafik: I am sorry, that is right.

Senator Croll: The very important amendment we made to the Canada Assistance Act when we went over it in 1966 was to insert the word “need”, so that whatever need there is has to be met—whatever that may mean. But that is not the object of what I have to say at the moment.

First of all, might I ask Mr. Cafik if he could in some way, between now and tomorrow or the next day, indicate to the minister, who is out in the country, that here in the Senate—and perhaps this is because we are a little closer to the aged people than some of the others are—we are very seriously concerned about this matter and we would like it to be a matter of priority for him to discuss?

Mr. Cafik: I will undertake to do that, senator.

Senator Croll: Is there any way that you can provide for us a record of what is paid by each province to the nursing homes under the Hospitalization Act—which of the provinces have accepted nursing homes as part of the Hospitalization Act and the amount they are paid?

I realize you may not have this at your fingertips, but could you provide that to the chairman in the next day or two, so that it can go into the record?

[See appendix “A”]

Mr. Cafik: We will do that. We do not have the information at our fingertips, but we will do that.