

about her fiance and said to her friend, "He said he would lay the earth at my feet". Her friend replied, "I would rather have a roof over my head". I think the old age pensioners feel that way too. Although we have had to fight very hard to even get this much—we still want \$150—the old age pensioners will remember history and realize that we were the ones who got them the old age pension in the first place. We are the ones who have been fighting successive administrations for these raises ever since, and if the pensioners ever do receive \$150 we will be the ones who got it for them.

• (1510)

Enough of history. Let me now come to more modern times. Every time this question is raised, we hear people ask where we are going to get the money from. We feel there are plenty of places that could be scrutinized and from which we could get the money. For example, what about the famous corporation tax reductions that are supposed to be coming before the House? I suggest that instead of bringing that measure forward, the Department of National Health and Welfare be given first refusal because it could put that amount of money to good use.

Of course we should be making provision for certain other groups in this country. It is ridiculous to expect two elderly people to exist in their old age on one pension. Yet there are thousands and thousands of cases where the wife does not qualify for old age pension by reason of age and where she has to try—pitifully—to get along by making her husband's pension stretch for the two of them. If, as the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) says, the measure of our civilization is how we treat our fellow humans, then I say that our civilization is still at a very low ebb in view of the form of torture to which we subject these elderly people by making them exist on one pension.

One of the very next measures that should be put before the House is one making it possible for wives of older pensioners who themselves are not working to qualify for a pension. After all, they have to be housekeepers and look after their older husbands; therefore they should be provided with the means of life. We should also consider moving the age limit down from 65 to 60, just as it was moved down from 70 to 65. Why cannot that be done? The Minister of National Health and Welfare said yesterday that there may be a few low paid workers who would like to retire at the age of 60. Let me tell him that this country is full of people who are ill, weak or handicapped at the age of 60 and who have no means of support until they reach age 65. We should find money to enable us to look after the handicapped, the partially disabled and the sick.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, if we do not look after these people by giving them a decent pension we will have to look after them through additional costs of hospitals, mental institutions and these wretched nursing homes where so many of them have to be confined. So we shall have to pay in any event, but we will be paying for broken, disabled and miserable people whom we could have saved for a happy and effective old age. It is true that we can weep over mothers and fathers who are single parents and the sole support of their children. But there is no sense just weeping over their woes; we must do something about them. We must help them support themselves

Old Age Security Act

and raise the citizens of the future by providing them with pensions or allowances.

It seems to me we are dealing with this problem as though we were looking at a sinking ship and saying that there are only enough lifeboats to save certain people and that others will have to drown. We are deciding whether we ought to save single parents or throw them overboard, or whether we should save the wife of a pensioner of the old age pensioner himself, since both are unable to get along on one pension. I suggest we should not be satisfied with anything short of a policy that looks after all these people.

How silly it is to maintain a military establishment in the world that we have today. All the military hardware that we have is for what? It is no use in this world or in the next. It is a sheer waste of time and money, of good brains and good people to turn our energies into that particular channel. That is another matter I could deal with in some detail.

Of course we can afford decent pensions for our elderly people. Let me point out that the argument used today is exactly the one used in 1926 prior to the old age pension legislation of 1927. Our old boys in the Senate, above all else, were the ones who wept over the sacred duty of children to look after their aging parents and who said that on no account must we take that duty away from the young by providing a pension for their parents. The same crocodile tears are being shed today when it comes to raising money to look after people who need assistance in this day and age.

If better pensions were provided, a number of unthought of benefits would result. For example, it would provide a tremendous stimulus to our economy. People who receive pensions and allowances usually have to spend them at once. They are people for whom food, clothing, shelter and the few amenities of life are very sorely lacking today. In spending their pension money they would provide a market for farm produce and factory products, and they would engage in various forms of activity which presently are sorely lacking. We might even be able to do something in the land of heavy water, or in the land of the great trees and the ocean in my part of the country. Such a pension would provide these people with the services that they need.

If the sick, the crippled and the elderly were released from jobs which they cannot perform competently and which they carry out at great pain, misery and suffering to themselves, we would provide additional opportunities for employment of our young people. I am convinced that it would also provide opportunities for necessary community services provided on a voluntary basis. When I hear hon. friends to my right damning the New Horizons program as a waste of money, I wish that some of them would get to know an old age pensioner or two. If they did, they too would realize exactly what the New Horizons program means to them. It is opening the door to new activities, to a broader world. In many cases it is opening the door to programs that will enable the elderly to meet with the young, help the young and the old to close the generation gap that for so long has been allowed to exist.

Mr. Roche: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.