

taxation in general, but I hope I am in order in pointing out what the white paper could have contained to help the pensioner with a low income. In passing, may I point out the pitiful situation in which retired civil servants find themselves, with a low fixed income eroded year after year by the spiralling cost of living.

If the pension dollar had the same purchasing value it had in the year 1959. I would not be introducing this motion at this time. However, I am thinking of the many thousands of pensioners, including the thousands of retired civil servants with an income of not much more than their pensions, for whom even the little assistance they may find in the modest exemption increase of \$1500 in their personal income tax, would be of some help.

Life expectancy at age 65 is estimated at approximately 15 years. It is a small recognition to extend to those who will live beyond their retiring age the right to enjoy a few extra dollars saved from their income tax. It seems that whether or not we should seriously attempt to provide a measure of income below which no man or woman will fall is a social as well as an economic and moral question. I admit at once that the measure of relief which the motion under discussion will provide to pensioners is very small. Nevertheless, it is an admission that it is immoral to allow some Canadians to exist below an adequate level of income, while the majority live on a level of prosperity.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on August 13, 1969, speaking on "Expenditures and Guidelines" said, and I quote:

We want to replace inefficient and outdated programs by new ones which will assist even more than now, low-income and destitute Canadians.

With the introduction of the suggestions contained in the white paper, it is evident the Prime Minister meant what he said on that occasion. However, the tax proposals in the document are not final. There will be ample time available for amendments since the date for the implementation of the tax reform is January 1, 1971. The head of our government always means what he says. He is not given to making promises, as everyone knows but everyone may not admit. He is a man of action, and I am encouraged to firmly believe that as soon as possible he will come through with a program which, in time, will dispense with the need of introducing resolutions such as this one. But, in the meantime, I submit to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) this modest proposal of giving those who have

Income Tax Exemption re Old Age Pensioners made their contribution to the sum total of our national development a little relief from the burden of taxation.

While I am proposing an increase in the personal income tax exemption for recipients of old age security pensions in general, I wish to add a word on behalf of the federal superannuates, for most of whom financial security has deteriorated considerably during the past few years on account of the escalation of the cost of living. I feel that the government should do something to alleviate their predicament by an upward revision of their pension benefits.

The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury), speaking to the Canadian Pension Conference in Montreal last May, dealt with the subject of an increase in pensions to the retired civil servants. He contended that the government could not dip into funds of the superannuation account to pay an increase in pensions to retired civil servants and leave to the future the question of repaying the deficit that such an increase would create. If it did so, the minister stated, the statutes would require the government to make good this deficiency by budgetary charges, so this provides no easy way out for the government under the present budgetary system. Frankly, I have not been impressed by the minister's statement, however correct it might be. If to meet an obligation, and I feel it is a moral obligation if you will, the government has to make good whatever budgetary charges may be necessary, so what?

However, I have faith in a statement made by the Prime Minister shortly after he took office. He said he had arranged for a review of the costs and benefits involved in our social security system which could take into account the question of the difficulties now being experienced by those living on pensions.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), speaking at a conference of social workers a few days ago on the subject of justice to the poor, had this to say and I quote:

That we should have poverty in Canada is, as the Economic Council has reported, a disgrace. The arguments of social academics, then, as to what constitutes the threshold of poverty, or whether there is a cycle of poverty, or whether most of the poor are found in the slums, or in the central city, or whether they are concentrated in areas of rural blight, appear not so much brutal, as banal. Poverty, simply enough, is pervasive; and poverty, unhappily enough, is present everywhere in Canadian society.

You don't have to tell the poor what poverty is, they know. They feel it very painfully—the sense of hopelessness and helplessness. They understand