

party with regard to the amendment before us. The Liberal party is destroying the democratic process of this country. There have been two glaring examples of the cabinet arriving at a decision and imposing it on the members of this House. With regard to the War Measures Act and the temporary public order act, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), a man of fine instincts and high intellect, having been presented with this bill by the cabinet forced it upon the members of this House without accepting any reasonable amendments put forward by the opposition. Examples of the reasonable amendments put forward were those dealing with a review board and bail.

Once the cabinet decides on a particular bill, they impose it upon the members of this House because the government has the majority. This bill is another example of the government destroying the democratic process. The democratic process depends upon persuasion. If the members of the opposition can persuade the government with regard to an amendment, the government has a moral duty to at least consider it and possibly implement it. The amendment now before us would insert the escalation clause in connection with the old age security pension of \$80 a month. The Government, through the cabinet, is telling the members of the Liberal party that no change will be made. I reviewed in *Hansard* the second reading debate on this bill. There are over 150 hon. members in the Liberal party. Only the minister and three other Liberals participated in the debate on one of the most important bills introduced this session.

I recall the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) introducing the guaranteed income supplement in 1966. He departed from the principle of universality which was implemented by the Liberal party in 1952. We had a very spirited debate in which the minister actively participated. I am rather surprised that he has not taken part in this debate. The fact that he has not strengthened my argument that once the cabinet decides upon the content of a particular bill, even though the opposition may plead and exhort it has no impact on the government. The result is destruction of the democratic process. A continuation of this attitude will make the members of the Liberal party puppets of the government. They will not be able to contribute to the debate on this bill.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has set forth our position in such an eloquent and persuasive way that I am sure hon. members opposite will be happy to adopt his amendment. Your Honour will recall that at the end of the debate on second reading when Your Honour asked whether it was the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion, it was adopted subject to a few members, including myself, shouting "On division". We shouted as hard as we could because we did not like the principle that the government was imposing with regard to the bill. It is a complete departure from the principle of universality which was established in 1952. We now have the selectivity principle.

● (8:10 p.m.)

In addition, the escalation clause attached to pensions of \$80 is to be removed. The more I listen to my hon.

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friend from Winnipeg North Centre expound the principle which the government is asking us to accept, the more certain I am I should join him in voting against it. I am asking that five members on this side of the House, or even on the other side, stand up on third reading and force a vote, because acceptance of this principle of departing from universality in favour of selectivity is likely to cause a good deal of damage and all Canadians should know what is being done.

The principle of selectivity was established away back in 1927 when the pension program was first introduced. A means test was thereafter applied. Between 1927 and 1952 members on all sides of the House pleaded with the government to adopt the principle of universality, and in 1952 it was adopted. When we enacted the Canada Pension Plan, Parliament added an escalator clause to provide for automatic increases in line with increases in the cost of living. This has now become a standard provision in many Canadian pension plans. When I think of the pension plans available to retired civil servants, RCMP officers, Members of Parliament and others, I have the joy of knowing there is an escalation clause in them to take care of increases in the cost of living.

In 1966, when the President of the Privy Council was responsible for this legislation we experienced the first departure from the principle of universality. Now we find this proposal for a further departure. When I consider the increase in the pension being offered, I am ashamed that as a Member of Parliament I have to take part in debate and try to persuade members on the other side that the increase is niggardly, mere flim-flam. The minister talks about the cost of the present escalation clause which I am trying to persuade hon. members opposite to retain. He says it will cost \$15 million. We should all know that in the old age security fund at present there is more than \$1 billion which has accumulated over the years. Surely, the retention of the escalation clause would cost nothing in comparison with that amount.

My hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre has recommended, first of all, a demogrant of \$150 a month on a universal basis and inclusive of an escalation clause. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) says this would cost another billion dollars. We could find the billion dollars in the foreign exchange reserve amounting to \$4 billion which is just sitting there. It would be an experiment accepted by all Canadians. In the old age security fund itself there is more than \$1 billion, enough to take care of a demogrant of \$150 a month.

The second proposal advanced by my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre is that we should make a universal grant of \$100 and a \$50 guaranteed income supplement to eligible Canadians in need. This would cost much less than the first recommendation. I am sure the newly-appointed whip, who probably appreciates the presence of a large number of pensioners in his riding, will agree wholeheartedly that this proposal ought to be tried and tested. After all, we have the necessary money.

It is worth repeating that a person living on old age security who receives not only the pension but the guaranteed income supplement, a total income of \$1,620, is