

retirement without always worrying: Where shall we find the money to buy clothes, to keep warm and to eat?

I have here, Mr. Speaker, an excerpt from a letter written by a man who is not from my riding. He is from Montreal. He gives his address and his name. The letter was sent to the right hon. Prime Minister in 1970 and I quote:

Honourable Prime Minister, to me and to other people you answered that you would try to improve our lives by a raising the old age security to \$150 a month without restriction.

This means: without taxes, without means tests, without being bothered by investigators who come looking into my closets, my refrigerator or still my vegetable cellar.

Well, he wanted security. He was not asking for the impossible; he was simply asking for something possible.

He also said and I quote:

We have to file an income tax return and we are even paying a little tax. Why not grant us an exemption of \$3,000 at 70 years of age...

Now I would add "60 years" because it is possible. I go on with quotation:

Don't you think that we have been paying long enough? How many years have we to live? An average of 5 years. What would such an exemption mean for the country?

Mr. Speaker, this is a wise and clever suggestion. He is not asking an increase for the sake of it, but at the same time he is offering the government a formula which would enable these people to get an increase, not directly in the amount of their cheques, but by sparing them the obligation of having to return too sizable an amount to the government at the end of the year.

Finally, he says this:

To end their days decently, the aged should receive a monthly \$200 pension, bearing in mind the present cost of living...

A while ago, I heard the previous speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) express precisely the same views. I remember having supported a motion here, in this House, at the time a bill on old age security was being studied, proposing precisely a similar increase. Is it idle fancy, Mr. Speaker? We must study the situation in our country to see whether it is possible to face the problem. With \$200 a month, will the age—and if I had the time, I would say how many of them there are; something like 1,800,000, I believe—gobble everything up so that there is nothing left for other Canadians?

Mr. Speaker, let's go back to Manitoba. Like everyone else, I have had the opportunity of seeing, from the air, the vast prairies covered with beautiful grain crops, where people toiled to reap and transform them in order to feed the people. We also had the opportunity to realize that some vast stretches of land were ploughed, ready to be seeded in preparation for next year.

So it is not these people with \$200 per month who will exhaust the resources of our country. One has but to stop a moment and look around to see that we also have an extraordinary potential of young people from 35 to 50 who are still in good health and capable to bring their contribution to this country's production if we enable them to channel their energy, to use the hours that Providence puts at their disposal in order to process in detail all the natural resources of this country.

### *Old Age Security*

Mr. Speaker, we must do everything we can to provide more security to older people, not only to those of 65 or over, but also to the 60-year old persons. I was pleased a while ago to hear the previous speaker mention again convincingly, the possibility for Canada of lowering from 65 to 60 the eligibility age to the old age security pension. As for me, I would add married people, even those whose age is below 60, because after all it is only logical whenever one retires that his or her spouse may be able to do the same so as to provide both with a happy retirement, spent in security, which would enable them to visit our magnificent country while they are still in good health, so as to see the work accomplished by our ancestors in order to build such a beautiful country which allows us to enjoy a security and freedom as no other country in the world can afford.

As far as I am concerned, I am willing to see Bill C-219 passed without delay. My colleagues whom I questioned about it, told me that they were in agreement with that.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) could also move, during the days to come, an amendment to the bill that would enable people aged 60 to become eligible to the pension and provide more generous family allowances.

I was pleased this afternoon to hear the Prime Minister say that the family allowance rate would be \$12 per month as of October. Mr. Speaker, people who have children can easily understand, considering the high cost of living, the great service we could do to all Canadian parents, and especially Quebec parents, who are at present helpless.

I am concerned with the birthrate which is decreasing year after year in our province. Unfortunately, that is not due only to the pill but also to an economic context which is preventing them from being their own selves. How do you expect a couple to live in apartments in Montreal or elsewhere when there is room only for machines and none for human capital. Then it is time something should be done and quickly before it is too late, because with the little experience I have of life I have learned one thing, that when we fail to do something by ourselves and for ourselves it is done by others and against us.

Therefore if we do not want that to happen, let us act now, and work like responsible people and give each and everyone that security which lies in freedom.

[English]

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### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering whether the acting government House leader or the parliamentary secretary would confirm that we will be going on with this bill tomorrow, hopefully to be completed before too long. In the event we have concluded the statute law supplementary retirement benefits amendments tomorrow, would the parliamentary secretary or the acting House leader indicate what we are going ahead with?

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that we will be dealing with this bill tomorrow and following that the statute law in respect of the pension plan. Following that, I am afraid it will depend on the House leaders to determine the future course.