

**Some hon. Members:** Ten o'clock!

**Mr. Speaker:** At the next sitting of the House.

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

### SOCIAL SECURITY—PROPOSED ELIGIBILITY FOR OLD AGE PENSION AT SIXTY

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Madam Speaker, on Monday, February 3, as reported in *Hansard* at page 2836, I put this question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde):

In view of the increasing difficulties being faced by elderly people as they try to cope with today's cost of living, will the minister consider recasting the proposed legislation regarding pensions at 60 so that those pensions will be made available not only to spouses but to all persons over 60 who are out of the labour market? Will the government also consider providing in 1975 a substantial increase in the basic amount of old age security?

● (2210)

The reply of the Minister of National Health and Welfare was to the effect that the government had already expressed its plans in this connection in the Speech from the Throne and he hoped it would be possible to bring in these plans in the form of proper measures as soon as possible. I suppose there are few phrases that are used more often around here than the phrase "as soon as possible". We are now into the month of April and nothing has happened with respect to this matter.

Accordingly, I am taking part in this late show tonight for the purpose of pressing upon the minister once again, whether for the tenth time or the hundredth time, the urgency of reconsidering the question of the age at which old age security is available. Before the minister brings in the measure that was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, namely, the proposal to provide on a needs test basis pensions to spouses between 60 and 65 where one spouse is already 65 years of age or over, I plead with him to recast the legislation and to make pensions available to any person at age 60 who is out of the labour market.

The arguments for this proposal, Madam Speaker, have been made so often, and the unsatisfactory reply of the minister has been given so frequently, that I do not think one needs to take the full seven minutes allotted tonight to go into it. I simply press the point that in our society today, making a living having become what it is, there are thousands of people who find it difficult to keep on in the rat race until the age of 65.

I am not proposing a pension for everyone at age 60 the way it is available to everyone now at age 65, nor am I proposing compulsory retirement, but I am contending that those at age 60 who are out of the labour market for whatever reason should be given the opportunity to obtain

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old age security and also any benefits to which they are entitled under the Canada Pension Plan.

May I point out to my good friend, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, that he is having a rather sterile session. In the minority parliament he was a busy minister; he brought in all kinds of legislation and we made pretty good progress. But what is his record so far in this session? So far in this session he has got parliament to pass Bill C-22, a very important bill amending the Canada Pension Plan, which by the way was a piece of legislation left over from the minority parliament and which was almost passed before the last election, but that is literally all that has been passed since the last election in the name of the Minister of National Health and Welfare. And what has he got on the order paper?

**An hon. Member:** Nothing.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Someone to my right says nothing, and that someone is almost correct. He has only two items on the order paper. One of them is a measure in his name that came from the Senate and which we are going to deal with tomorrow, Bill S-9, to repeal the Proprietary or Patent Medicine Act, and that is actually the only item on the order paper in the name of the minister as Minister of National Health and Welfare. The other item in his name is in his name as minister responsible for the status of women, and that is Bill C-16 having to do with equality of status. It is an important measure and I hope it will not be long before it is brought forward.

But, Madam Speaker, there is nothing at all on the order paper in the whole area of pensions. I looked through my files today and I came across the orange paper. I remember how excited I was when that paper was brought down. I felt we had a minister who was interested in these matters, but what is his record? This minister has held conferences with his counterparts in the provinces, and he has talked about a guaranteed annual income. I gather that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has overruled him in cabinet on that.

I do not like to see my hon. friend having such a poor session. I am giving him the opportunity tonight to make up for this sterility and bring in a measure that would be warmly accepted and welcomed on his side of the House. Indeed, it would be warmly welcomed in all parts of the House and it would make a real contribution to the social security structure of this country. I call upon the minister to forget that record he has played so often and to tell us tonight that he is prepared to consider introducing at this stage a measure providing pensions on a voluntary basis at age 60.

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, I am always interested in listening to the hon. member, but I was particularly struck by the comments he made regarding the lack of legislation before the House. I was struck even more by the comment from the Tory party to the effect that there was nothing. The hon. member referred to the bill amending the Proprietary or Patent Medicine Act. I was interested to hear once more that on the part of the Tory party the status of women is nothing. Members of that party have shown plenty of evidence to this effect by their comments in this