

Income Tax Act

members in this chamber today who can recall advertisements in daily papers promising fun and frolic at age 50. Even a young man like myself can recall the pictures of a man and wife, who appeared to be less than middle aged, relaxing in a handsome out-board motor boat, fishing, and convincingly indicating they did not have a care in the world. The caption probably read "You, too, can live like a king on \$200 per month for the rest of your life." Now it is almost impossible to believe that the caption could have been valid. Nevertheless, in those days, with no dependents one could live like a king on \$200 per month. The alarming fact is that many beneficiaries who sacrificed to save for a planned retirement with a life of ease are today's senior citizens.

Although this dream has long since been shattered by inflation, young people today are still raising families. They still sacrifice to provide a better way of life with adequate opportunities for their children. They still reach the age of retirement.

Old age pensioners, a term I dislike—I prefer senior citizen pensioners—now approach this category with considerable trepidation, if not outright fear. Life savings, regardless of amount, no longer constitute a bulwark against loss of salary on retirement. I do not refer to the relatively few who have amassed large fortunes, a large percentage of whom usually die young. My reference excludes those who have inherited too much wealth. Conversely, I cannot include those in our society who have failed to exert sufficient energy to support themselves and have been content to go through life as parasites, content to live on the dole on the premise that the world owes them a living. I admit that the actual percentage of Canadians within this category is low, even though our welfare costs are staggering.

The majority of Canadians are in the middle and low income brackets. These sincere, hard-working people who try desperately to pay their way are actually tomorrow's pensioners. The Canada Pension Plan will undoubtedly lessen their burdens by providing a small degree of security for future years. However, if it is valid to persuade Canadians that a participating program of compulsory pensions is designed for their benefit at age 65, can we, with any degree of sincerity, deem this small remuneration to be taxable until they reach the age of 70?

[Mr. Pringle.]

Another facet creating an additional burden for our older citizens is the increasing contempt of personnel officers for experience as opposed to academic degrees. Not long ago a man was considered employable until the age of 65. Most people, even though health and mental powers were intact at age 65, were willing to surrender to a younger generation. However, partly as a result of automation many in our society are now unacceptable at an age less than 50. Members of parliament now receive submissions from Canadians in all walks of life who suddenly find that, although they possess the essential knowledge plus more experience than is required to fill vacancies, they are discriminated against because of age alone.

I mention this now, Mr. Speaker, because we are debating the possibility of partial relief for members of our society who have reached the age of 65. If the economics of productivity indicate that men of 50 or even less are too old to make a satisfactory contribution, is it not possible that this resolution is not only overdue but should include a measure of tax relief before the age of 65?

• (5:30 p.m.)

The gnawing and haunting effect of the steadily expanding inflationary spiral must, indeed, add a burden to senior citizens and pensioners. In this resolution we plead for this parliament to grant a small measure of relief by lowering the age limit for pensioners who will be eligible for an additional \$500 exemption before income is taxed.

We are inclined to discuss the serious problems resulting from inflation among ourselves as they relate to fixed income citizens in general, and to pensioners in particular. I am somewhat impatient as I hope that we will soon refrain from discussion and initiate action.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) recently issued a white paper on price stability. He deserves congratulations for the efforts of his department on this problem. We hope that design for action will be fruitful. Inasmuch as my career to date places me in the role of a businessman, I confess to some skepticism. The apparent approach to the problem of inflation control will be through another commission which will function without benefit of teeth. This is most idealistic, but is it realistic? Time will tell.

If we continue on the premise that free enterprise must be controlled by competition,