

*Old Age Security Act Amendment*

Canada Pension Plan gets into operation. Again, I wish to quote from this special planning secretariat. I think this is very important:

While the introduction of the Canada Pension Plan in 1966, and the gradual lowering of the age of eligibility (from 70 to 65 by 1970) for old age security, will have a cumulative effect in greatly improving the income of the aged in Canada, two residual problems will remain. One is temporary, yet serious, and the other continuing. Many of those who are already aged or who will become so in the next five to ten years will receive either partial benefit or no benefit from these program improvements. For them financial problems will remain.

That is one point. Here is the other:

In the longer term, there will always be some of the aged who have never been in the labour force, or whose attachment has been relatively brief; many of this group will continue to have inadequate income in their later years.

So, there are these two categories of people whom the Canada Pension Plan will never cover. These are people who ought to be considered when one is thinking of a plan of this particular type. I should like to suggest that until a proper study is made of the minimum needs of elderly people in this country there should be no stop-gap or scatter-gun program of this kind. There is another point. A member opposite quoted me in June as favouring the guaranteed income. He did not need to go that far back. I will quote what I said on December 5, as reported at page 10737 of *Hansard*:

We in this party, are in favour of a guaranteed income, Mr. Chairman, but to call this a measure to provide a guaranteed income would be laughable if it were not so tragic. My colleague from Winnipeg North Centre, as I say, has already referred to the \$138.96 statistic which the Senate committee reported last January was the monthly amount required by single people to live on.

I went from there to describe the Swedish plan for guaranteed income. Mr. Speaker, the idea of a guaranteed income did not begin with the Senate committee on aging. Back at the end of the second world war the C.C.F. party, which was the forerunner of the New Democratic Party, wrote into its program a policy which would provide a guaranteed floor below which no Canadian income would be allowed to fall. Some of us have never forgotten that in our platform. It is one of the most important planks in our platform, and it has been there for many many years. A guaranteed floor under income, however, is not a hole in the basement. We believe that to call this thing a guaranteed income is simply to use a device at the moment to hide a great

gaping hole beneath the incomes of the old people in this country.

Mr. Speaker, until we have a proper study of the minimum needs of the aged in this country to arrive at a proper figure for a guaranteed income, until formal arrangements have been made with the provinces to protect the provincial supplements of the old age pension recipients, there is only one sound course to follow; that is, again this year to give an across the board increase to all those people on old age security and make sure that every bit of that award which people do not need is taken back in the form of income tax to be applied toward the provision of better universal old age pensions.

These are the things in which this party believes. May I say that I hope the minister, when he goes to bed tonight, may see the ghost of Christmas past and Christmas present and that when he wakes up in the morning he will suddenly discover all the Bob Cratchits of Canada and their grandparents in the old age bracket dancing around very, very happy that during the night the minister transformed himself into Santa Claus and left them with a straightforward, unhampered old age pension of \$105, with the hope that if they are good next year they shall have an even better pension.

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, the MacEachen test seems to have preoccupied the past two or three speakers. They made references to it and tried to get around it. My remarks, however, will be somewhat brief and I hope useful. First of all, I should like to suggest that there probably are three or four very basic differences between the position of the opposition with regard to this matter and the position of the government. In each particular instance, these are substantial differences. As suggested by the previous speaker, they are not based upon an unconcern for the elderly people in Canada and are not based on any misunderstanding of the real need of the older people for more substantial income. Rather, they are based on a different understanding of the best way in which to approach this problem.

First, I wish to deal with the adequacy of the basic \$75 a month as a permanent amount of money, its relation to the transitional aspect of the supplementary question and, finally, universal application as it spells out the differences between the approach we would take to the solution of the problem of the aged in this country and that chosen by the government. Because the minister has used it as an