

Old Age Security

what you are doing? In other words, I had to choose to terminate their existence as bums or help them continue living as bums. It is the same thing for the government of Canada in respect of poverty in Canada. No matter what you do it is the wrong thing. If you say no, you are always left with the haunting feeling that perhaps this was the one of two or maybe the one out of four—take your fractions any way you wish—who was the honest man who was down on his luck and whom you should have helped. We must help the poor. But we must not help or encourage the poor to live as they do. In any individual case you must ask whether this is the honest type of man who is down on his luck and who should be helped. On the other hand, perhaps it is the type of person who would, as so many do—and I am giving an extreme example here—take the aid you would give him or them, as in an example I remember, and cast it aside. I recall once being rather taken in by a fellow, in retrospect. I obtained a good pair of boots for him and was disturbed to find that he had thrown them over the fence into the yard of the next door neighbour. If you help a person who is honest and genuinely poor, no sooner than you do someone else comes along who will spoil the situation.

● (3:00 p.m.)

If we can retain a culture in North America in which it is good to work, then we should have no fear of having all the income security plans we wish and all the guaranteed income we can provide because people will reluctantly live in that manner. But we must always be looking further and further ahead and asking ourselves whether we possess a culture in which the day will come when the majority will be among those who are willing to take what is handed out, ride free on someone else's ticket without qualm and the social pressures to work which surrounded the people studied in New Jersey.

Recognizing the monetary limitations we have to accept within our nation, recognizing the desperate need to do something about the genuinely honest poor, and recognizing—as many members have pointed out—the fact that when you come to the breakoff line of any program that is attached to a selectivity or means test type of approach there will be a large area in which there will be discrimination between honest and responsible people and some dishonest people who will take advantage of the program, the step we have taken is really the only one open to us.

We must remember that we must inevitably move in the direction of a guaranteed annual income, adding the caveat that as we do that I hope some organization or institution in Canada will begin massive research into this question: When the general attitude prevails that people ought to provide for themselves, one can receive aid and at the same time have a greater incentive to help oneself. But if the whole culture was no longer work-oriented, could we expect these same benefits to accrue from the same program? This is a fundamental question of urgency now. With those remarks I would hope this bill could be referred to the committee as rapidly as possible, where it can be dealt with in detail.

[Mr. McBride.]

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I begin my few remarks with an expression of thankfulness in respect of this bill. Long ago I was taught to be thankful for small mercies. By Zeus, this is a small one! I notice the Ciceronian member who preceded me ended in the growing tradition that once an individual expresses himself, he then suggests the matter move on quickly to the committee. Surely he will allow me a benediction after his sermon.

I enjoyed the hon. member's remarks both this afternoon and when he made them earlier in another debate. I appreciate the fact that he is sticking by his convictions. I was a little surprised when my hon. Presbyterian friend from Broadview (Mr. Gilbert) said this morning he was going to act like a Methodist preacher. I thought that was carrying the ecumenical movement a bit too far! I also enjoyed his remarks. I think a matter of this kind requires that we look a little deeper than usual and that we do not fear being profound on these matters which are in large measure a general appraisal of some pretty fundamental things in our society.

I mentioned the small mercies and I do confess, as did the leader of our party the other day, to a feeling of intellectual deflation—an unusual word at this time—concerning the presentation of this measure and, indeed, the white paper by the minister. It seems that in recent years the political life of this country has been characterized by a deliberate process of inflating the expectations of the Canadian people. It seems to me there is always an immense governmental and administrative labouring, followed by an overdue birth of some legislative mice or, to use the jargon of the day, some dwarf demograts.

So often we are presented with white paper upon white paper and have a study following a series of preceding studies, and always there is dripping from this process the expectations of tremendous things to come for the Canadian people. I suppose that is part of the charismatic age. Charisma was a concept once known to political scientists and theologians; now it is a hallmark of the practising politician in some sectors and in some countries. Very careful use of slogans is adduced to bring forth a response of great expectation. One of the great elections of this country was characterized by a couple of slogans. One was the just society, and another was the appeal to preserve national unity. I read now that even the slogan "the just society" has been discarded. I feel that if the slogan is gone, then it is all gone.

Mr. Dinsdale: That is all there ever was.

Mr. Macquarrie: In this debate I cannot talk about national unity but I do think an awful lot about what has happened to it. This should not surprise me, because even Dickens' "Great Expectations" had a sad tone. We never seem to end this process. I was wondering where the man now in charge of the Post Office was. I am not referring to the incumbent Postmaster General, who is present, but rather the other one. I discovered he is in Britain and that we are studying, through the minister, something we have studied in the last few years through all sorts of research. I refer to the questions of the zip code and the