

Mr. Speaker, speaking of the Liberal party convention which took place in November, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) expressed himself as follows:

I have said repeatedly that inflation is taxation's most regressive form since it strikes hardest at those who cannot defend themselves, either because they do not belong to the limited group of shareholders or great businessmen, or because they are not members of a powerful trade union.

Mr. Speaker, after that, the Prime Minister could have added: Our words are quite different from our deeds.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose that it is under the pretext of inflation that the government offers 1.4 cents per day to our senior citizens. As the Prime Minister said so well, and I quote: —because they cannot defend themselves, because they are not members of a trade union, because most of them are not either among the shareholders of big companies.

The group of people concerned by Bill C-202 deserves more than an increase of 1.4 cents a day. They have paid for their security a long time ago and they are not responsible for the increase in the cost of living. It is really ridiculous to make them share the increased cost of living, because labourers, housewives and retired people did not bring on inflation.

Inflation has been brought on by finance. It is by paying two or three times what we built once, what the government has prepared, which is the cause for inflation.

On page 88 of *Hansard* of September 16, 1968, concerning a question asked to the minister responsible for the National Harbours Board about the cost of Jacques-Cartier bridge, we can read a letter from Mr. Clément, superintendent engineer of bridges addressed to a certain Mr. Chénier of Montreal, which reads as follows:

Dear Sir:

Your letter of May 9, 1968, requesting some information on Jacques-Cartier bridge, has been brought to my attention. I am pleased to supply you with the following information:
Original cost of the Jacques-Cartier bridge—\$18,571,308.71
Amount of the interests paid to date—\$20,198,266.53
Balance to pay for the bridge—\$14,065,605.39

This Jacques-Cartier bridge phenomenon is not unique. It takes place every time a development projet is carried out by federal, provincial, municipal and school authorities. However, in Quebec interests on school debts collected as a whole by school boards represent every day the value of a regional school, which means that each year, we give the equivalent in interest of 365 regional schools.

It is not surprising that with such gifts, the economy of Quebec, a supposedly poor province, should be somewhat perturbed. In the present system, the province of Quebec is not the only one to be perturbed. All Canadian provinces are presently facing difficulties.

To come back to pensions, the proposition provided in the bill for those who enjoy no other additional income is \$135 for 1971. With the escalation rate of 2 per cent, this pension will reach \$149 a month in 1975, that is \$1,788 a year. Also, as the inquiry of the Senate Committee on Poverty discloses that those whose income is less than

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\$1,944 a year in 1970 are living in dire poverty, it is evident that this government bill is already out-of-date.

In short, it is because this bill is recommending measures whose application will be spread over a six-year period, which is already considered insufficient to live on today, and is within the poverty limit, that on behalf of the Ralliement Creditiste, I tried to bring in the amendment appearing in the orders of the day and which reads as follows:

That Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be amended by deleting in Clause 1 all the words after the word "of" in lines 10 and 11 at page 1 and substituting therefor:

"one hundred and fifty dollars to every person who has attained sixty years of age."

Mr. Speaker, we, of the Ralliement Creditiste, have presented this amendment because we feel that the Prime Minister, who is a bachelor and who has been a millionaire since his birth, has no idea of the financial problems and other difficulties of those who cannot work.

He gave us further proof of this in November, at the Liberal Congress, when he said, and I quote:

When the Old Age Security Act was amended, we provided an escalation of benefits of 2 per cent per year so that benefits would increase with the rise in the cost of living—

Unfortunately, for the past three or four years inflation has increased at a much higher rate than expected and consequently the intent of the legislation has been frustrated.

Mr. Speaker, those are the very words of the Prime Minister.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[English]

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise)—Canadian Broadcasting Corporation—Invitation supposedly addressed to François Girod; the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale)—Air Transport—Fares based on Canadian dollar pegged at 92 cents—payment of compensation for overcharging; the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Ryan)—Immigration—Reasons for decrease in number of Chinese admitted to Canada.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I understand there might be some willingness to dispense with Private Members' Hour and continue with the business which has been under consideration this afternoon. If that is the case, I would certainly be willing to give our consent.

Mr. Baldwin: On our part, there is not only willingness but eagerness, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Same here.