

*The Budget—Mr. Caouette*

Therefore, I must say that as a result of a lack of funds, thousands of projects are refused, and I say to the Minister of Finance that if a world war were to break out tomorrow morning, all young people would be enlisted in the armed forces. Then the necessary funds would be available to pay them, to clothe them, to feed them and provide them with suitable accommodation. I consider the government as being responsible for the disillusionment of the youth, which is completely disgusted by the public administration.

So, I am plainly telling this government that what the old parties have been able to achieve in wartime, the Cr ditistes undertake to do it in peacetime, that is to enable people to live decently in law and order.

Let no one tell me that there are not enough funds to assist our young people in creating or building something, when in wartime we find all that is required, nothing is lacking.

Mr. Speaker, we complain that youth is rebelling. We do not even allow them to participate in society and then we are surprised to find out that young people take up the cudgel against anything and want to destroy our Canadian society.

Instead of blaming the young who have their backs to the wall, let us condemn the financial system administered by the Minister of Finance. This is where the trouble lies.

To help the young, impossible! To pay \$6,191,000 a day in interest only on the national debt, forget about it. The minister did not criticize that in his speech. He simply said: We shall help the aged. We agree. We have been in this House for ten years. Personally, I have been a member for ten years. I have constantly asked for better pensions for the aged. They are given \$150, we ask for \$200, but we shall nevertheless vote in favour of the government proposal.

We would have liked to see pensions granted from age 60, instead of 65; when the minister reaches 60, he will find that he can no longer find any work. He will no longer be in Parliament then and he will not be able to find a job. So, he would be happy to have the old age security pension. He should have thought about this when he prepared his budget. He should have announced pensions for people of 60 or over as well as for their spouses.

This afternoon I directed a question to the minister about pensions, because, last night, I was stunned to see on television the Quebec Social Affairs Minister about to faint because the federal government was granting increases in pensions. That would disrupt his comprehensive system, which he never produces. He blames Ottawa for giving something to Quebec's senior citizens. I fail to understand the stance of Quebec's Minister of Social Affairs. I have been told that by this time he may have turned in his resignation because Ottawa is considerably damaging the Quebec plan. I don't see what damage can be done if Quebec is not contributing a penny to this increase.

However, these increases still create problems on the provincial level. This morning I received a letter from a mother who is on welfare and supporting, alone, ten children, ranging from 20 to 2 years of age. She receives

welfare benefits of \$232 and she is wondering how they can pay \$285 to a senior citizen and his wife. And justifiably so! She has no objection to old people receiving \$285—not at all—but she is asking me to find out from the government how it could support 10 children and their mother on \$232 a month. These are welfare benefits to which the federal government contributes 50 per cent and which are administered by Quebec—according to Quebec criteria.

Ren  L vesque could not improve on the minister.

Mr. Speaker, that mother is right. What reply did she get when she applied for an increase in her welfare payments? The public servant employed by Quebec told her: "Madam, the criteria prevent us from increasing your benefits. Go out and work to increase your income". If she did go to work, she would lose her whole allowance, or part of it.

• (1720)

However, there is another solution. They told her: If you cannot make both ends meet, if you cannot maintain your children, hand them over to us and we shall look after them. In such a case, the government would be willing to pay \$800 a month or \$80 per month per child placed in a foster home. They would break up the family by taking the mother out of her house and by taking her children away from her. The department is willing to pay. If the minister does not believe me, I could bring him to the welfare office in Hull tomorrow morning; I could have him see for himself whether this is true or not. They grant \$80 per month for each child placed in a foster home by welfare offices. The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion knows that this is true.

So, why should we put up with such a situation? Why, Mr. Speaker, must we inflict such troubles to mothers, as I pointed out earlier today? If a man receives a pension of \$150 and his wife is under 65, she is not entitled to a pension. If both are 65, they will receive \$285. If the mother is 58, 59 or 60, she will probably apply to the welfare office to get \$30 or \$40 a month—

**An hon. Member:** \$25.

**Mr. Caouette:** —\$25 or \$30. Let us say \$40 and be generous with the government. Forty dollars plus \$135 make \$175. If the wife is 65, then she will be granted \$285 instead of \$175, that is, \$110 more, as if a person who is 65 ate more than she did at 58, 59 or 60.

That is not all. As the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) told me at noon today, as soon as the pension increase is passed by this House, the Quebec Social Affairs Department will reduce the pension paid to the mother who is not yet 65. She receives \$40—

**Mr. Ouellet:** He never said that.

**Mr. Caouette:** He added: "I hope not". But we know that this has always happened in Quebec. If the hon. member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) says the opposite in Quebec, he will lie to the people. I know how things go because I am aware of it. The hon. member for Papineau takes pleasure