

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

with the federal government getting out of that field. His reply was that the federal old age security program was the lower deck, of the total program, the Canada Pension Plan being the upper deck, and therefore it could not be surrendered. It is good to know that there is something that protects the old age security program, that it cannot be done away with but that it has to remain as a base for the Canada Pension Plan.

I would remind the government that when we were discussing the Canada Pension Plan and asked whether the bringing in of that plan meant that old age security had to stay at \$75 a month for the rest of time, we were told that this was not necessarily so; that as time went on, as wages and prices went up, it was quite possible to raise the amount of that basic old age security pension to a higher figure with the benefits of the Canada Pension Plan being in addition thereto. I do not want this to wait until today's old age pensioners are dead and gone. I think that the time for action on this matter is now. In all this talk about the just society, there should be some place for our older people.

I hope that the parliamentary secretary, or whoever is going to answer me tonight, will be a little more precise about the possibility of an increase in the basic amount of the old age security pension during the course of this session. This really is a must.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Rosaire Gendron (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, needless to say the government does not intend to repeal the social security programs it has set up, but on the contrary to establish standards in some cases and to give provincial governments, if necessary, enough authority to carry out these programs, even though insofar as we are concerned we could open up new areas in the field of social security.

I already answered a similar question raised by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis), and I would like to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for his concern for our older citizens—a concern shared moreover by all hon. members.

In this regard there are several points I should like to bring to the attention of the hon. member. Firstly, the amount of the basic old age security pension has been increased in two successive years as the result of a rise in the pension index. In January 1968, the

amount of the basic pension was increased from \$75 per month to \$76.50, and in January 1969 the amount moves to \$78 per month. If the cost of living continues to rise, further increases will take place.

Recognizing that a number of older people had little or nothing beyond their old age security and, further, that they could not benefit under the Canada Pension Plan, the government introduced the guaranteed income supplement program. This provides a supplement to the basic old age security pension of now up to \$30.20 per month. Eligibility is based on a simple test of income. By virtue of this amendment to the Old Age Security Act, it is expected that in January 1969 some 300,000 old age security pensioners will benefit under the guaranteed income supplement program. Many will receive the maximum, which means their total benefit will be \$109.20.

I am sure the hon. member and his colleagues agree that the contemporary guaranteed income approach is the most effective and most responsible approach to a just society.

Realizing that a number of pensioners need supplementation beyond the maximum of the combined old age security-guaranteed income supplement, the federal government, through the vehicle of the Canada Assistance Plan, makes this possible. Under the Canada Assistance Plan, the federal government will share 50 per cent of the cost of any supplementation made by a province to an old age security pensioner. There is no ceiling on the amount of such supplementation, eligibility being based on a test of need.

Finally, I should like to re-emphasize what the minister has already said on a number of occasions, that is, that all our social security programs are under intensive review at present by the government. When this review is completed, if firm conclusions are reached, they will be announced to the house. In the meantime, I want to assure all hon. members the government is desirous of Canada having an overall social security program designed to meet the needs of various segments of our population, keeping in mind the resources which are available.

● (10:10 p.m.)

*[English]*

## MEDICAL DIRECTOR—MOOSE FACTORY

**Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane):** Mr. Speaker, when I raised a question earlier today about a petition sent to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro)