

Expansion of Social Security

[Translation]

Mr. Boutin: The hon. member has just stated that his party has increased old age security benefits by \$10 a month. Does he not think that in doing so, the government worked against the other classes of society, since it raised personal income tax by 1 per cent to help the aged? It imposed a burden on those workers who must pay for such assistance.

[Text]

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question I would suggest that the funds necessary to pay this have to come from taxes in some form or another. There can be a great argument on economic grounds as to which is the most equitable way to raise these funds, and I think we must take into account that an increase in corporation taxes was levied in order to pay for old age security benefits. I do not know whether the hon. member has taken that into account.

In a period of little over a year we have increased the amount of old age security, and raised blind persons allowances.

3. We have increased disabled pensions by \$10 a month.

4. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre referred to the Canada pension plan. With the implementation of this plan some of the most serious gaps are going to be filled, and I would point out to the house that the constitutional amendment necessary for the Canada pension plan will be brought before us tomorrow.

5. To a considerable extent this plan will help the widows with dependant children, and the orphans to which the hon. member referred.

6. I hope and understand it will also make some allowance for the hardship imposed by funeral costs, which many people find very onerous.

7. Further, the government has indicated it regards as a priority measure, and hopes to deal with it in this session, the extension of family allowances, which to some extent will contribute to the over-all cure that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre did not mention, but which is referred to in Harrington's book. This will at least give some encouragement to those of our children who want to go on to higher education.

8. There is also the question of interest free loans, which generally falls within this area, interest free loans for students who wish to acquire a higher education. Some of

these measures I have mentioned have already been implemented. Others are regarded by the government as priority legislation for consideration at this session, and taken together they go a long way towards filling many of the gaps.

9. The hon. member mentioned, so far as welfare legislation is concerned, that pensions under the Canada pension plan will now be available at 65 years. This in itself goes a long way to fill in what undeniably is a serious gap. Therefore I think that the government and all the parties that have helped to pass this legislation can take some considerable pride in these measures.

10. Another point to which the hon. member referred was what he termed medicare. It is true that the Liberal party had health care in its program, and this will go a long way to alleviate the hardship of those Canadians who, because of low incomes or unemployment, cannot afford proper medical attention. This is part of our program which will be implemented. We are committed to implementing it.

Mr. Knowles: When?

Mr. Munro: The hon. member has been told that in answer to several questions. He knows about the royal commission on health services, and it would be foolish for the government not to await the findings of that commission and make an extensive study of them before bringing in proposals with respect to health care.

Mr. Knowles: That was the answer a year ago.

Mr. Munro: Then that must have been about the first question which the hon. member put to us when we assumed office. The commission was considering its report then. Is the hon. member suggesting that we should go ahead and bring in a detailed plan without taking into account the tremendous research that has been done by this royal commission? Surely he is not suggesting that? Surely it is sensible to study this report to find out how the recommendations which seem to be most feasible can be implemented? We are told that the time is not far off when this report will be made available, and we look forward to receiving it.

I would think that in the normal life of a parliament—and sooner if at all possible—if a medicare program can be brought down then it, taken in conjunction with the proposals already implemented by this parliament, and in conjunction with those which