

can the government generate sufficient money to pay the cost of the welfare state which we are about to establish in this great land of unlimited opportunity.

There are a great number of people in Canada who are keeping us on our knees. They demand from government the right of a decent living. The right the government owes them is the right to work, a chance to participate. For some, the measures contained in this bill are totally meaningless. The steps the minister has proposed have not, and will not, solve the problem of those people unless the cheques, no matter from which department they come, are accompanied by a blueprint for living in our complex society. This should be a package of brotherly love and understanding, which is perhaps the old-fashioned way.

Perhaps the cheque should be accompanied by a commitment from the government to find a way in which we can help those citizens who are deprived, so that they may find a way in which to make a worth while contribution to the productivity and prosperity of our land. It must be a way which does not necessitate the punching of a clock, because these people would never do that or go to the trough at a given time. However, a way must be found to provide these people with an opportunity to experience the pride of accomplishment and joy of giving, instead of receiving.

When we do anything for these people, Mr. Speaker, we must consider whether there is any more horrible or disastrous situation that this 20 per cent of our citizens could live under anywhere else in the world. It is much harder to be poor in Canada than anywhere else in the world because our standard of living ranks among that of the leading nations. The potential in Canada is much higher than it is anywhere in the world. It is so much tougher to be poor in Canada, because there are so many rich people. I know the pain that a mother or a father must endure knowing that their children know their deficiency, and the pain of knowing they cannot get off the path they have made through the snow, a path that leads nowhere, a path with no purpose, no beginning and no end.

● (2150)

In light of that, does the bill go far enough? Perhaps the welfare cheque that we are paying out should include enough money so that the Canada Pension Plan premiums could be paid with it. Perhaps the old age security should be amalgamated with the Canada Pension Plan some day, so that when a person reaches a certain age it should not matter what kind of contribution he has made in earlier life because, again, we are basing everything on this productivity and the dollars he has earned during his productive years.

In looking at the bill, I find that the removal of the 2 per cent ceiling is certainly a step in the right direction. Our senior citizens, however, would have liked it much better if we could have found a solution to the problems posed by the ever-increasing cost of living and inflation. They would have liked it much better if we could have managed our affairs in such a way that the increase would not have been necessary.

I, too, would like to exchange ideas regarding the retirement age. The bill, of course, does not provide for the gradual reduction of the retirement age down to the age of

### *Adjournment Debate*

60. I would like to qualify this by stating that I do not think we should make it compulsory for a person to retire at any age, but we should certainly make it possible for a person to retire at the age of 60 if he wishes it, and not penalize him for making way for a younger person who wishes to put his shoulder to the wheel.

I think that the monitoring agency should make an annual report instead of a report every five years, as is the case now. The way things are going, it is not adequate to assess the functioning of this fund every five years. I would have liked to explore the possibility of making all Canadians eligible for retirement benefits. In that respect I would like to echo what all my colleagues have said, that is, I would like to think it possible that women in our Canadian society be given an equal chance of receiving equal benefits to those received by men when they reach a certain age.

In light of that, we should not overlook the fact that this would be a saving to the fund because under the plan it would not be necessary to provide benefits to a widow who has not contributed. In 1967 we started to pay benefits to retired contributors, which are now being made to pensioners at the age of 65. As I said, we should have kept going; but it is not too late now, and I hope that the minister in the next bill he will introduce will have the foresight to consider very seriously allowing people to retire at the age of 60.

There should have been an assessment of the plan in order to find a solution to the problem which unwed mothers, and single-parent families face. We should examine the contributions which the provinces have made to the deliberations to which the minister referred earlier. People from Newfoundland, and particularly Anthony Murphy, believe that programs of this kind contribute to one's security and enhance one's sense of independence. It would be a wonderful thing if pensions and social insurance were universal and sufficiently adequate to meet the basic needs of all Canadians in their retirement or in their disability.

There are thousands of Newfoundlanders and thousands of Canadians in other parts of the country who do not contribute to the Canada Pension Plan or, indeed, to any other pension plan, and until they have the means and the opportunity to do so they will remain in a disadvantaged position. I hope we can do something to strengthen our Canada Pension Plan and other programs and make them the hub of our social security system. I take it from his statement that Anthony Murphy feels as I do, that some day we will not need many other programs if we round out the opportunities that the Canada Pension Plan provides.

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### PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.