

known as the categorical programs. In addition, there is the Unemployment Assistance Act of 1956, the application of which was substantially widened by amendment in 1957. All of these, of course, are joint programs. The federal contribution is one-half of the \$75 a month maximum provided for recipients of Old Age and Disability Assistance. It is 75 per cent of \$75 monthly maximum available to blind persons. In respect of Unemployment Assistance, the federal contribution is 50 per cent of the benefits payable to recipients.

Each of these programs is administered primarily on the basis of means. It is now proposed to discuss with the provinces a comprehensive program which will be administered on the basis of need. A dominion-provincial conference is to be convened at the end of this month and will consider this question.

Honourable senators, I believe it opportune to proceed with such a program at this time, for at least three reasons. First, the provinces are anxious to see such an approach to welfare implemented. Secondly, when the economy is in a period of expansion, as indeed it is now, it seems provident to undertake such a study. Thirdly, the recently adopted Canada Pension Plan will have an important bearing on the operation of our welfare programs as they now stand.

As honourable senators know, the Canada Pension Plan goes a long way towards providing some security in the period known as old age. The Old Age Security provisions will be fully effective from age 65, in five years. The wage-related portion of the plan will become available to persons retiring over the next 10 years, year by year.

Many people, however, who have not been able to provide for themselves and who are unable to take advantage in full of the Canada Pension Plan will present a problem to themselves and to the country. Under the proposed assistance plan, people now over age 70 will stand to benefit on the basis of their need. Those between the ages of 65 and 69 who are not adequately covered by the provisions of the Canada Pension Plan will also be assisted.

Honourable senators, may I conclude with this short remark. It is important that the committee work of the Senate be developed as effectively as possible. I do not know of any other branch of our work which holds a higher place in public esteem among people who know about us, than the work which is done by our standing committees and special

committees. The trouble is that enough of the public do not understand and do not appreciate the value of the parliamentary contribution made by the committees of this honourable house.

The Committee on Aging has been set up and will shortly produce its report. We will very soon refer the estimates to our Standing Committee on Finance, as we did last year. I expect that we will be asked shortly to nominate membership for the Joint Committee on Consumer Credit. We shall also be asked to appoint senators to a joint committee to consider the state of penitentiaries under the control of the Government of Canada.

Last session Senator Thorvaldson and I desired to make the Committee on External Relations more active, but with the kind of session it was, an opportunity was not provided. However, Senator Thorvaldson has been energetic in this field and he will shortly indicate his imaginative intentions.

There will, of course, be other committees whose chairmen will be anxious to undertake special studies.

I urge honourable senators to do all they can to ensure that these committees achieve the same high standard of performance which has characterized their work in the past. I hope also that there will be a very wide participation in this debate.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Hollett, debate adjourned.

## RETIREMENT OF SENATORS

### INQUIRY

**Hon. Jean-François Pouliot:** Honourable senators, I did not want to interrupt the interesting speech of the Leader of the Senate, but I have a \$64,000 question to ask him. For the senators appointed for life, will there be a limitation of time to apply for superannuation?

I do not want an immediate answer. Perhaps he would be kind enough to give an answer tomorrow, after consultation with whom it may concern. This is a matter of interest to all of us. I wonder if a senator who is on his deathbed will be allowed to make a choice for a pension.

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** Are there two questions?

**Hon. Mr. Pouliot:** No, it is one question. It goes to the deathbed. Therefore, my question is very simple.