

Old Age Security Act Amendment

It is not a needs test at all; it is a means test under another name. The minister hopes it will smell like a rose and be acceptable to the people. He hopes they will turn round and applaud him and all the rest of it. I tell him that when this provision is enacted into law more complications than he ever dreamed of will result.

The minister can smile. He can laugh it off, but I tell him now that he should go out into the country. Do not make any mistake. If he wants to find out what is going on, he should go out and talk to the old age pensioners. Get some sense into what you are trying to do before it has bad effects. Perhaps the minister is too busy to do this. We all know how busy he has been working out this plan. But he should consider what is being said out in the country. He should consider what the effects of the means test will be because it will plague him and it will plague the operation of the bill, offsetting all the good he is trying to do.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, let me say that this evening I enjoyed the speech made by the member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard) and on the whole I enjoyed the speech made by the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson). I enjoyed his argument but I could not agree with his suggestion that we save \$100 million by taking it away from the C.B.C. I think that sometimes C.B.C. programs lack good taste, but I recognize the value of the C.B.C. to Canadians as a whole in promoting Canadian culture, Canadian unity and so on.

I rise to support those members who have urged the minister to use the present Old Age Security Act properly to provide an increase of \$30 a month for all persons entitled to old age security under the act. I will not repeat the many excellent arguments put forward by members of the opposition. I will not use the figures which have been used. I intend to take a slightly different tack. When one is late in speaking in a debate like this a good many of the arguments have been used and repeated often.

I listened with great interest to the minister's speeches on the resolution and second reading of the bill and I give him credit for using the best defence possible for the government's position. I might say that the minister is very popular on this side of the house. We all like him. He has a very, shall I say, bland and disarming approach to any problem we bring to the attention of the house which

[Mr. Kindt.]

makes it all the more difficult for us to criticize him severely on occasions. The minister made the best defence he could of the government's position, if we are prepared to depart from the basic principles of the Old Age Security Act. He has been called a Scrooge by some members on this side of the house. I prefer to be more charitable. I shall refer to him as a sort of scabrous minister on this issue.

During his speech, he mentioned that to conform with the principles of the Old Age Security Act would cost the country \$100 million now and up to \$200 million by 1970. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, and I want the house to know this, that I am not a dreamer when it comes to money matters. I am not given to supporting any government proposal unless I am convinced it is financially sound. I trust the minister will listen to my remarks, having in mind my background and attitude to many of these questions. That principle to which I have just referred must be recognized whether a government is known as a free enterprise government or a socialist government if we are to legislate in the best interests of the people as a whole on sound financial lines.

I speak this evening as one who has lived in complete and happy independence and security practically all his life on an income slightly above the social welfare level. That was so until I was elected as a member of parliament. Of course, my financial circumstances have changed somewhat since then. But I believe that all government schemes must be financially sound to be of permanent value.

I oppose the limiting terms of the present legislation for the following reasons. First, it represents a departure from the basic principles of the Old Age Security Act which received the approval of the members of this house and the majority of the Canadian people when the act was passed. That act was passed after a great deal of effort by many members of this house to get the government of the day to accept the principle of universality so far as old age security was concerned.

I oppose this legislation on the second ground that the bill provides, shall I say, for a form of taxation under false pretences in that it taxes some who will not be allowed to enjoy the full benefits of the act when this measure is adopted.

The third reason is that I consider the bill to be unfair because it will prevent certain pensioners from going abroad if they wish to continue drawing what the minister calls the