

Old Age Security

because they are asking for higher subsidies rather than lower ones. The other is to ensure a sufficient supply, and the third is to come to the assistance, mainly through social security measures, of those who cannot protect themselves against inflation.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members will appreciate that we have gone beyond the time allocated under the rules to the question period. I thought I would recognize the hon. member for Egmont on a supplementary question and also the hon. member for Athabasca.

INQUIRY AS TO WHETHER MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY PRIME MINISTER TO COMBAT INFLATION CONSTITUTE GOVERNMENT'S CONTINGENCY PLAN

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. In previous weeks in the House he mentioned that he had a contingency plan with which to deal with inflation. Can the Prime Minister indicate whether the announcement made yesterday represented this contingency plan or whether there is still a contingency plan to deal with inflation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I answered the very same question yesterday. The hon. member should refer to *Hansard*.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

PROVISION FOR QUARTERLY ADJUSTMENT OF PENSION

The House resumed from Tuesday, September 4, consideration of the motion of Mr. Lalonde that Bill C-219, to amend the Old Age Security Act, be read the second time and referred to the committee of the whole House.

Mr. Speaker: As we adjourned last night, the hon. member for Bellechasse had been recognized. I therefore recognize the hon. member for Bellechasse.

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity of concluding my remarks. I shall be very brief in view of the intense heat that we have to put up with. I would merely add this: I have the definite impression that it is extremely advantageous for the Canadian people to have a minority government, because it enables them to have the passing of measures which would certainly have been turned down under a majority government. Here is the proof: A few years ago, under a majority government, the old age security pension had been increased by 42 cents, whereas in 1973, under a minority government and during the same session, we obtained most substantial increases. This means that Canada can do something for the aged whether the government holds a majority or not. What must be considered is the capacity of our country for giving justice and ensuring security for the aged.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

• (1510)

I also wished to add that really extraordinary things are happening within the field of family allowances and to meet the needs of those who spend as much today as they did a few years ago for social security, especially family allowances, Providence really put things straight.

This afternoon, I was given really extraordinary answers to questions I had placed on the order paper and that will prove interesting not only to hon. members but to the Canadian people as well.

To the first question:

1. What percentage of the gross national product was spent on family allowances, as at July 31, 1945?

The reply was the following:

1. 1.92 per cent.

Those figures are for the year 1945. Here was the second question:

2. What percentage of the gross national product was spent on family allowances, as at July 31, 1972?

The answer was:

2. 0.49 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the more people work, the more they develop the natural resources of this country, the more they increase their production capacity so as to enable families and individuals to live in greater comfort, the smaller the percentage of increases benefits granted to families.

Not later than yesterday I was saying that Canadian families, especially those in the province of Quebec, are in difficulties and that we were asking the government to provide a greater percentage for social benefits by increasing family incomes to enable them to cope with the cost of living increase.

Now, Mr. Speaker, social benefits allocated to families in 1947 amounted to 8.99 per cent of the budget and in 1973, to 2.48 per cent.

That is why I was greatly pleased yesterday to hear about the increase that is to be given in October, but as I was leaving the House, I had the honour of meeting the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) and of talking for some time with him. He found the statement I made quite reasonable and I repeated to him what I asked during the month of July, although family allowances will be increased from September 1 in order to enable low and middle income families to benefit more from an income which would encourage them to fulfill their duties, to carry out their mission so that this decrease in births comes to an end in our province and our country.

On behalf of these people, I would like to ask the Parliament and the government to adopt this measure as quickly as possible and even if it costs a few millions more I would like to say that the Canadians have carried out a task which is extremely difficult. They turned the wealth of Canada into consumer products. The people did that. This makes the task easier for parliament and government members: we do not have to work to produce these things but we have the responsibility, the duty to work and enact legislation in order to ensure a just and fair distribution of