

Disabled Persons Act

Mr. Pearson: My hon. friends make a great virtue of all they have given to the provinces. We will put some figures on the record this evening to correct that situation as explained by the Prime Minister. My hon. friends talk about all the money they have given to the provinces and how wonderful it has been for the provinces. If this is true, why is every province in this country dissatisfied with the fiscal relations they are having at the present time with the federal government? What is wrong with it, then?

Mr. Benidickson: Including Ontario.

Mr. Pickersgill: Especially Ontario.

Mr. Pearson: The province which is perhaps most dissatisfied is the province of Ontario, which was going to get \$100 million from this administration by following John. They followed John all right, and they followed him right into the sales tax.

Mr. Jones: What about Quebec?

Mr. Chevrier: Look at the results of the by-elections.

Mr. Pearson: The Prime Minister, however, ignoring the decline in our economy over recent years, has asked, what we would have cut out of these expenses in order to help reduce the deficits. Well, there are certain things which could have been cut out; there are certain economies which could have been made. How many millions and millions of dollars have been added to our expenditure in this country by that ill-fated conversion loan? There is one way in which millions of dollars could have been saved. Another way was by getting interest rates down so that we would not be faced with these swollen interest payments on our national debt. Another way would be in not devoting hundreds of millions in the past four or five years to useless defense expenditure. So we could have done both; we could have kept the economy going at a better pace than it has in the last five years, thus adding to our production and to our income. At the same time we could have cut down useless expenditure arising out of things like the conversion loan.

The Prime Minister had a good deal to say about shared programs, even though it is difficult to see how he could relate shared programs to disability allowances and disability pensions.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Do the provinces not contribute?

Mr. Pearson: However, the right hon. gentleman brought the question up and, therefore, I propose to deal with it, especially as

[Mr. Jones.]

he has challenged me to answer certain questions. I am delighted to have the opportunity of doing so.

An hon. Member: When?

Mr. Pearson: Right away. I have unlimited time and I propose to take it even though it may postpone the date of the election by a few hours. That, Mr. Chairman, is a risk I shall have to take. But before we get into this matter of shared programs, it occurs to me that the Prime Minister had something to say about the level that should be reached in connection with a pension and allowances scheme. He talked about our niggardly contributions in the past. He does that every time he talks about social security. He cannot get away from the fact—

An hon. Member: Nor can you.

Mr. Pearson: I want to give the Prime Minister a little friendly advice, because he is going to need a lot of it in the weeks ahead. I advise the Prime Minister, as befits the head of the government of a great country, to look ahead, to look to the future and to put forward proposals which would help this country meet some of the problems which are facing us—to give the people of this country the feeling that at least he understands what these problems are. It is amusing, it is entertaining, it adds to the gaiety of the House of Commons when the Prime Minister makes the kind of speech he made this afternoon, but it does not do anything toward the solution of the problems which face us. Perhaps when he speaks again the right hon. gentleman will tell us something about those problems and what this government is going to do about them instead of worrying so much about the elections of 1957 and 1958. The people are more concerned about the election of 1962 and they are more concerned with the policy that the government is going to put forward to meet the problems facing this country in 1962. The right hon. gentleman will have us back in 1953 with the "horses on the payroll" before he goes much further. He nearly got there today.

Mr. Diefenbaker: A guilty conscience?

Mr. Pearson: We do not need to worry about having a guilty conscience over the election of 1953. I propose to say something in considerable detail about programs shared with the provinces. I did not know that this subject was coming up, but then one never knows what is going to be brought into a debate when the Prime Minister gets on his feet; you have to be prepared for everything from the shipment of base metals to Cuba to programs shared with the provinces.