

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I meant with regard to oratory.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: As I go along I may be able to indicate why he made that reservation.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): I was just talking about the oratorical side.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: The sponsor of the bill here and the minister who sponsored it in the other place have stressed the fact that there is a relationship between this bill and the recommendations of the Senate Special Committee on Aging. It has even been said—though Senator Connolly did not go that far—that the bill is based on the Senate committee's report. The minister did go that far. I have too high a regard for Senator Croll to accept that as a fact. That there is some relationship, there can be no doubt, but I suggest to honourable senators it is at best a poor relationship—

Hon. Mr. Brooks: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Grosart:—of which Senator Croll and others, like myself, who were members of that committee are not entitled to be very proud.

The principle of the Senate report was a good one. It is to be found at page 19 of the report, under the heading, "Summary and Recommendations." Because I am going to speak for a few minutes about the differences between this bill and what was recommended by this committee, perhaps I should read it—it is very short.

The committee endorses in principle the institution of an income guarantee program for all persons aged 65 and over and recommends to the federal Government that this proposal be given immediate study.

The committee elaborates upon that further on, and I shall refer to that in a moment. What I want to point out at this stage is that the present bill does not constitute an income guarantee for all persons aged 65. As Senator Connolly has pointed out, it includes only those who are presently recipients of pensions under the Old Age Security Act.

Now, it is true that in some respects the bill goes beyond and improves upon the recommendations of the Senate committee. These are largely the mechanical aspects of the bill, though not all of them are unimportant. However, I would like to suggest that this bill falls tragically short of what the Senate committee proposed in at least four main aspects.

The first, of course, is that it does not provide any supplementary income, any financial assistance of any kind for persons now aged 65. It may be said that in three or four years the 65-year-olds will come under the provisions of this bill, but I should like to point out that as the committee heard the evidence of our senior citizens, and in its discussion of that evidence afterwards, the one point that impressed itself more than any other upon the members of the committee was that it was the duty of the committee to bring in a recommendation for immediate action—for action now—with respect to those of the age of 65 years. That was the crux of the recommendation of the Special Committee of the Senate. Why? The answer to that is that the committee had evidence time and time again of this fantastic gap that has arisen because of the general policy among business firms and the Government of Canada of compulsorily retiring persons at the age of 65. It is still a mystery to me why the Government of Canada insists on retiring people at 65 years of age. It is something for which the committee was unable to attain any reason.

Nevertheless, this was the area with which, by and large, the committee was primarily concerned, because at that time there was, and still is, no government action of any kind for taking care of this most urgent and pressing problem of people who are 65, 66 or 67 years of age. I suggest it is just simply not good enough to say, as the honourable Leader of the Government has said, "Oh well, they will be looked after by 1970."

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Or under the Canada Assistance Plan.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: The honourable Leader of the Government mentions the Canada Assistance Plan. I will have something to say about its relationship to this bill in a few minutes.

My second point is that this bill takes this great principle, which the Senate committee enunciated, of a guaranteed annual income for all citizens over 65 years of age, and uses it only as a stop-gap to fill up a hole that they themselves thoughtlessly left in the Canada Pension Plan. It applies until 1975, as far as people coming under it for the first time are concerned. After that date what happens to the recommendation of the Senate Committee? After that date what this bill provides ceases to be a guarantee, ceases to be annual, and ceases to be income.

The third point I should like to make is that there is another large group of senior citizens