

Old Age and Veterans' Pensions

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Leader of the Opposition going through a litany of excessive statements today. He said we had a computer for a conscience, wondered if members on the government had any sliver of conscience, said they were completely lacking in a sense of justice and that they were callous, said they showed monumental ingratitude, were inconsistent, against the weak and the poor, and so on.

An hon. Member: All true.

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, that may have been great stuff 10, 15 or 20 years ago, but I cannot believe the Leader of the Opposition really believes this now. Surely he could have suggested what he would have done, in his statement. The Leader of the Opposition could have suggested what he would have done. He could have suggested how much he would have increased the pension and how the federal government should be prepared to absorb this particular cost, what programs must be cut in relation to payments in this area or what other programs he feels should be ranked lower in terms of priority than this particular one. He could have suggested that we should have gone into guaranteed income supplement and not used the basic rate.

● (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Stanfield: That is what I did.

Mr. Munro: He could give us some guidance about priorities. The Leader of the Opposition really did nothing other than make a blatant political appeal to the old age pensioners of this country. The blatant political appeal, with no substance, that the Leader of the Opposition had to revert to today is one of the reasons why many of our senior citizens are very cynical about politicians.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the minister must have been engaged in conversation when I spoke, because I suggested that he could not do anything beyond the resources of the government regarding the general old age security. I suggested that he concentrate on increasing the guaranteed income supplement.

Mr. Munro: As the leader of the official opposition knows, in the programs in my department alone we are spending approximately one-third of the total federal budget. Counting the health and welfare sides, we are spending in the vicinity of approximately \$4 billion a year or more. We must now look at the situation in terms of priorities, recognizing the needs of the old age citizens and

veterans of this country as a very high priority indeed. But what about the working poor, the deserted wives and children, the crippled and disabled who are not in this category? What about some of these people whose financial structure is not as rich as those with whom we have been preoccupied today? Where do they rank in terms of priority?

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The only way a question can be permitted is by unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. MacInnis: I wish to remind the minister, on a point of order—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is rising on a point of order.

An hon. Member: The point of order will be phony.

Mr. MacInnis: It may be phony, but you will have to listen to it just the same. The time allowed members in this debate was certainly violated by the minister, who spoke longer just to cut off questions that he cannot answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Munro: I spent half my time answering questions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I remind the hon. member that Standing Order 61 provides—

Mr. MacInnis: You should have reminded the minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Standing Order allows 30 minutes for the minister's reply. We have taken that position in the past whether it is during the debate or at its conclusion. That practice has been followed today.

It being 9.45 o'clock p.m. it is my duty, pursuant to section 8 of Standing Order 60, to interrupt these proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House. All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.