

Medicare

inflation caused by this government. It was a ridiculous position for him to take.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I should be glad to answer the question as to where I stand.

Mr. Winkler: Please do.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I think that the record of governments which I have supported, and my own record, will show that this government, the St. Laurent government and the Mackenzie King government have a record in the field of social welfare and old age security that cannot be emulated at the present time by any other country in the world.

Mr. Winkler: I will not deny that the minister has been part of all those things that are good. That is what I said a moment ago. But I cannot understand where he stands in relation to the situation today. This is nothing short of deceit. The minister knows very well that \$220 million is in the old age security fund today, and if he had acted in accordance with his good conscience, that increase would have been given last January and this money would have been used. Let us not forget that this program will not become effective until July 1, 1968. I must say that the minister has not a leg to stand on in respect of this question. We are getting back to his old friends, the six bucks boys; and the minister cannot deny that fact. The elderly people of this country need an increase in pension.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked me a question, and every time he asks me a question I feel so kindly disposed to him that I want to respond. What the hon. member is doing now is denying the passage of a bill that will be of great benefit to not only the young but the elderly people of this country.

Mr. Winkler: That is right; but two years from now—don't forget that, either. The old age pensioners' need is today, not two years from now. This bill means nothing. Let me make another point while we are at this particular stage of the debate. Let me ask the minister this question: When the vote on second reading is taken and the clause remains in the bill that this plan will become effective July 1, 1967, what is the government going to do about that situation?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Let us get on with the bill.

• (9:10 p.m.)

Mr. Winkler: What are they going to do about it? Will they take this debate outside the house? Will they change the bill? The government does not care and the minister does not care.

Tonight I will put another point on the record, Mr. Speaker. The only reason we have for being involved in this debate at this time is to ameliorate the position of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen), because his colleagues in the cabinet know very well that they pulled the rug out from under him and now they are trying to make him feel better about the deal. Who is suffering? I suggest that if the measure in regard to old age pensioners is passed immediately after this bill, it is the old age pensioners who will suffer. There is no need to increase taxation to pay these people. I suggest that as of this date there is in the neighbourhood of \$220 million for this purpose and in view of the fact that Christmas is two months away the government could take the opportunity of doing something worth while, instead of indulging in this sort of blackmail two years from now. I suggest to you we will not even get a chance to vote on an amendment on second reading because we will defeat the government at that stage. We will force them to bring in this legislation on July 1 of next year, if we have the opportunity, and I am giving them notice of that tonight.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also believe that since the beginning of a federal-provincial conference is taking place in the nation's capital today I would like to put on the record that I believe this Liberal government is usurping the constitutional rights of the provinces. Normally I would be speaking in support of the right of the federal government and I believe that it is only too seldom that we in this house think nationally. I think it is true for almost everyone here that we are inclined to be somewhat parochial when we speak of our constituencies and our provinces. Of course it is the right of the provinces to feel that way, and in this particular case we know that the government is forcing its position on the provinces in regard to this bill. In fact if the right thing were to be done, the money that is set aside for research and the medical professions would be more properly spent if no strings were attached to it, and if in particular the conditions laid down under sub clause (c) of the bill, which is the compulsory clause, were dispensed with.