

Old Age Security Act

ment. So if there is any authority required, I think the hon. member for Victoria will find it there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. McKinnon: I doubt that it is a proper point of order, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to say that I regret the submission the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) has made. I agree almost entirely with what she has said, and I did not in any way intend to put down Mr. Woodsworth, for whom I have very deep admiration. I agree with the hon. member that the party on the other side never would have put in the legislation without his urging.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Before the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway continues, I would point out to the hon. member for Victoria that he did not, of course, raise a proper point of order.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): I would like to say that I was not worrying about what was said about Mr. Woodsworth. What I was concerned about was urging the hon. member to go back and look at the *Hansard* reports of those days. There is no need to speculate about the circumstances; the written record is there.

I think we now have referred to enough facts in this connection. But I want to point out that even as people in those days were in a mood to get old age pensions on the statute books and intended to see legislation put there to that effect, they were organized to this end. And so, today, people in this country are in a mood to get things done as well. While I have heard members to my right speak in very beautifully couched and glowing sentences about how this is a very mean amount to give the old age pensioners and how, once they take office, endless and bountiful pensions will descend into the laps of old age pensioners, until the hon. member for Victoria spoke a few minutes ago I had not the faintest idea what amount his party intended with regard to old age pensions. Now, thank goodness, I have a very definite answer. They intended to give the old age pensioners \$97.88. Well now, I think the old age pensioners, while they may not all be happy at having elected the Liberals to power, certainly will not feel they missed anything by not electing to power the bargain basement outfit to my right who would have given them \$97.88.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): I am very grateful that under the prodding of my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre the hon. member for Victoria has at last broken down and given us the figure the Progressive Conservative party considers to be appropriate for old age pensions, the sum of \$97.88.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I think the hon. member is rising on a point of order.

Mr. McKinnon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lang: Sit down.

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

Mr. McKinnon: My point of order is, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway is confusing the tense of my remarks. I said we promised that on September 1. I did not say that it was what we would now be satisfied with. Time marches on, even among the best of us.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): That is not a proper point of order. I must remind the hon. member that the rules do not allow him to rise without consent unless he has a proper point of order. He may not use the occasion to raise a point of debate or give an explanation.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): If you can take it, Mr. Speaker, so can I. The point is that if the \$97.88 was promised on September 1, I would be prepared to bet it would not be higher now, because that date was just before the election. However, I would not want to do the hon. member an injustice. If the figure the Conservative party has in mind is different from what it was at that time, I wish they would tell the House what it is. We have been trying for some time to get them to name the figure they would set for old age pensions.

It is all very well to describe what they would have done in the most glowing and attractive terms. But what the old age pensioners want to know is, how much? So far, the figure of \$97.88 is the only one I have been given. If there is a later amount, I think it would be a good idea for a speaker from that party to give the exact figure they propose now, before lowering the boom again on some subsequent speaker. It might be to their advantage to do so.

The fact is that there have been nine increases in old age pensions since the program was first established. Two of the increases have been made under Conservative administrations. It may be that this was because the Conservatives were not allowed to stay in power very long—they can have it that way if they wish—or, if they were in power, that they were not much more generous than they were last September.

I left out one footnote to history, Mr. Speaker, and I would just like to bring it forward. When J. S. Woodsworth and A. A. Heaps sent that famous and historical letter to Mackenzie King, I think it was the first and the last time in recorded history that Mackenzie King ever signed his name to a promise; he knew that a sharp and pointed instrument was aimed at a vulnerable part of his anatomy and he knew it was time to sign. When that happened, the Hon. Arthur Meighen, who was then the leader of the party of my friends to the right, was also sent the same letter. Mr. Meighen, with the same caution which is being displayed by his party today, sent back a lawyer's answer to the question, "Will you give us old age pensions for Canada?" He sent back a lawyer's answer that meant, "We'll see". Well, he was not given the chance to take office. The other party was sustained because although they did not give people all they wanted even then, they did give something concrete and tangible.

I think people to my right ought to take a lesson from that. People today want something concrete and not just glowing promises. It is like the girl who was boasting