

Inquiries of the Ministry

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government is at the moment attempting to put into effect as quickly as possible the Canada assistance program and is, in addition, considering what more can rightly be done to improve the position of pensioners in this country.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Was the Minister of National Defence speaking for the government when, as reported in the Toronto *Telegram* of yesterday, he said:

Defence Minister Paul Hellyer was asked if the pension would be increased.

"It's inevitable", he replied. But he declined to say when he thought it would happen.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Does the Prime Minister agree with that?

Mr. Pearson: The Minister of National Defence was quite correct in that statement. It is inevitable because we have linked the pension to the cost of living; therefore it goes up as the cost of living goes up over the years.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Starr: An increase of a dollar and a half in 1968.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Allard (Sherbrooke): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order about the question put by the Leader of the Opposition to which you allowed the right hon. Prime Minister to reply. I should like to know what difference there is between the question I raised yesterday in this house concerning family allowances and the question of the Leader of the Opposition. It was a similar question and you said it was out of order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows these decisions are taken on the spur of the moment. If he wants to appeal from the decision of the Chair, he may refer the subject matter of his question for debate on the adjournment motion.

Mr. Allard: I wish to discuss this question at ten o'clock at the next sitting of the house.

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, so many points of order have been raised that I have almost forgotten the question to which mine is a supplementary, but it relates to the question of old age pensions. I wanted to ask the Prime Minister whether the government is giving consideration to the recommendation of the Senate committee on

aging for a guaranteed minimum income for all over 65.

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I answered this question the other day and said at that time the government was giving very careful and immediate consideration to the important recommendations of the Senate committee, and that a committee had been set up for that purpose.

[*Later*]

Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce): I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question arising out of an earlier question. I should like to ask the Prime Minister, in view of his reply in regard to old age security increases and the question asked by the hon. member for Bow River with regard to the rapidly rising cost of living, if he will tell us approximately what the date of that inevitability might be, as referred to by the Minister of National Defence?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Prime Minister. In view of his statement earlier this morning that the government is anxious to proceed with the Canada Assistance Plan, can he say when this legislation will be on the order paper so that we all may have a look at it?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, from the way we are now progressing, I am quite sure that it will be on the order paper before we are able to take it up, so that hon. members will have an opportunity of looking at it before it reaches the chamber.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**STEPS TO MEET INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Bow River): I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister, and I think it is of great national importance. Would the Prime Minister take the house into his confidence at an early date and outline the steps the government is prepared to take immediately to curb the ever escalating cost of living, particularly since he dealt with it in answer to the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Speaker: Again, this is the type of question that is very general in nature. The hon. member is asking for a general statement of policy. The question requires a detailed reply, and if the minister makes a long