

*Canada Pension Plan*

The first weakness which I note in the plan—I have spent a fair amount of time studying not only Bill No. C-75 but the two white papers and Bill No. C-136—is that there is nothing in this proposal for those who perhaps need it the most, namely the people who are already retired. Shortly after the second white paper was released, which I think was around August 10, I was invited by an old age pensioners association in my riding to explain to them the Canada pension plan. I did this, basing my explanation on the white paper which was issued at that time. When I had gone through my explanation of the plan they said to me, in effect: "Is there nothing in this for us?" I said: "That is the way it is." I am sure that since the white paper was released this kind of reaction must have been received by the government.

Then again, last week I was home for Remembrance day, and on the Tuesday morning when I saw the morning papers they carried a headline to the effect that a new departure in the Canada pension plan was that the old age security pension would from now on be tagged on to the cost of living index. There was great jubilation at this; it sounded wonderful. While I was travelling back from British Columbia by plane I read many papers from right across the country, and it was significant that every one of those papers had almost the same verbatim release, obviously emanating from the public relations branch of the department.

Then when I got back to the house and read the provisions of Bill No. C-136 dealing with the amendment to the Old Age Security Act it immediately became obvious to me—and I would use the words of the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas)—that this is an absolute, complete, cruel hoax on these older people. In the first place, this particular proposal is not part of the Canada pension plan. It was a very clever trick to include in Bill No. C-136 the amendment to the Old Age Security Act so that the government could say that they had done everything for those already retired. But it is actually an amendment to the Old Age Security Act, in the first place, and in the second place the assistance it gives to these old people is negligible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, how can this proposal in Bill No. C-136 be changed so as to do something for these people who need it most? I should like to refer here to the fund which is being built up. The fund, according to the actuarial report, will build up to \$8.4 billion in 1985. It is true that from then on, unless

the contributions are increased there may be a reduction in the fund. According to the forecasts there undoubtedly will be a reduction in the fund.

These old people to whom I spoke said to me: "Why not use some of the fund built up to give us something? Is it necessary to have as large a fund?" According to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss LaMarsh)—she has now changed her mind, or perhaps, had it changed for her, I do not know—when the first masterpiece was presented, and when talking about whether or not there should be a fund, she said, as reported at page 2342 of *Hansard* for July 18, 1963:

These were the arguments balanced by the government in coming to its conclusion that this plan should not be funded; thus the plan is framed on a pay as you go basis.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, if that was the position at the time when the first pension plan was presented some amendment can be made to the present plan so that the fund does not build up as quickly and some of the money can be diverted to help those who are already retired.

Yesterday I received a letter from a lady in my riding who is just over 60. She has a small pension which is just enough to disqualify her from local social welfare. She wrote to me and asked me what was in the pension plan for her, and I had to reply regretfully that under the present government proposal there was nothing in it for her, at least until she reached the age of 70. Even at age 65, with the little income she has—it is barely subsistence income—she cannot qualify for old age assistance, so she has to wait until she is 70 before she gets anything at all. That is the type of person who needs it most, along with widows, aged 60 and many others aged 65 who do not quite qualify for old age assistance. They are the people who need help most.

I should also like to refer to one other group of those already retired, and I am thinking of the superannuates, the ex-employees of the government. The government recently released on November 10 last a bulletin which clearly indicates to the superannuates association that they have no hope of getting any help. The government refuse to accept its position as an ex-employer of these superannuates, and the superannuates' proposal has been turned down by the government on the basis of a principle.

What did the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) say on December 27, 1963, in a letter which