

Canada Pension Plan

country for all Canadians including the Hutterian Brethren church's members.

If we set up these reserves within our community, will these people live solely unto themselves? Is that what they are doing? No; they market their products through our marketing system and therefore should pay part of the cost of making that system effective. But if we allow their standard of living to be below ours, will it not also affect their ability to produce, to compete and to provide food and necessities for the Canadian community of which they are part, whether or not they want to separate from it? There is no question in my mind but that it will. If we consider that the standard of living includes the educational level of a group of people—and it must—then if we allow them a lower standard of living, we will impose on them a handicap in their production of goods within our marketing system.

I am not in any way being derogatory to the Hutterian Brethren in the province of Alberta; they are a very industrious and hard-working people and so far have been able to keep up with the rest of the province. Many people say that they are only farmers and that somewhere in their teachings it is said that they must remain on the land. That is not really the fact, Mr. Speaker; actually their teachings protect their concept of communal living and their concept of that protects them from sin and shelters them from trading and dealing with people. They take their teachings from one of their early writers who states—and I am speaking from memory—that they shall not be dealers but shall be producers of primary goods, that “sin lurketh like a hinge on a door between the door and the door jamb” and if they become dealers they will be tempted to sin. Therefore they want to remain primary producers, thus sheltering themselves from the evils of our way of life. Many of us would be far better off if somebody had sheltered us, but in the long run we would be worse off if we were not prepared to meet the troubles of today and tomorrow. We would fail to develop character as men prepared to play our part in building a peaceful world.

This is really what we are saying: set this group aside and let them continue their way. We do not really need a cultural, technical or medical contribution from them; we will go and prosper without their help but let them live in our community. Mr. Speaker, it is wrong, morally and spiritually, for us as Canadians to allow that situation to exist. I know all about the Bill of Rights and freedom of religion and I have dealt with that. It is not against their religion, provided they do not take out a social security number. Nobody has yet said that anybody in Canada will be forced to take a social security number, so it is not against their religion and that is not an influence until they themselves make it so.

I urge the Minister of National Health and Welfare to consider the amendment very closely. It suggests that instead of their general level of living, the Canadian standard of living be applied to determine whether their parents, their elderly and their disabled are properly provided for. We would not then have the ghetto, those pockets in our society which will continue to send out people who are perhaps not as healthy or as rugged and able to stand up to the trials and tribulations of today and tomorrow, and who perhaps have not sufficient education to cope with our society.

[Mr. Horner (Crowfoot).]

● (1640)

Having said that, I urge this House to move cautiously on this bill. Apparently the Minister of National Health and Welfare is under an illusion. He thinks that he alone can introduce a guaranteed income for all Canadians, so that all those not enjoying the standard of living which he thinks ought to be enjoyed by Canadians will be able to enjoy that standard. Yet, he suggests that there are some who will not be affected by the guaranteed income plan. How can a minister, who is a stalwart believer in the idea of all Canadians enjoying an adequate and equitable standard of living, come forward with a bill and say, “But we will allow people who are farming over one million acres in Alberta and probably one million in Saskatchewan or Manitoba not to contribute to the plan. We will allow them to be subjected to the same standard of life that their grandfathers and their grandfathers before them enjoyed in years gone by.” I am puzzled to understand how the minister can advocate these two courses, especially as he wants to eradicate poverty in Canada. How can he allow this situation to exist?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired.

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner). It is difficult to add to what the hon. member has said without being repetitious, because he has pretty well covered the waterfront, so to speak. There are a couple of concerns I wish to underline with regard to this legislation and the amendment before us.

I think most people espousing a small “c” conservative philosophy are in favour of a society in which every person lives at the level he wishes. Of course, the ideal is never attainable in this world in which we are fortunate or unfortunate, depending on one's outlook, to live. Society must organize itself and abide by certain rules and regulations. I think it has been shown that a society is probably happier if there is not a great divergence in standard between those at the so-called top of the heap and those at the bottom. I am trying to say that, possibly, a society should be homogenous. Perhaps there ought not to be too great a variation between the level of those at the top and those at the bottom, so that there is less room for conflict, envy and several other human failings.

Let me say a word or two about the price that certain people are prepared to pay for their beliefs. I do not think any of us can exist in society without making some sort of contribution, financial or otherwise, towards the maintenance of that society. We do that in order that we may live with our fellow citizens. One can cite examples taken from all religions which show that people must make sacrifices, monetary or otherwise, in order to maintain that way of life in which the people believe.

Actually, I would support some sort of legislation, which might be presented to this House, which would allow a person's contributions to the Canada Pension Plan to be completely voluntary. As I said when I spoke on this bill on second reading, I have no sympathy for the concept of the Canada Pension Plan and did not favour that legisla-