

Old Age Security Act Amendment

on his previous statement and has turned it down. I have quoted his own minister.

Mr. Brown: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to me as being either stupid or dishonest. I will say in reply that I certainly was not stupid enough to vote for an amendment supported by a member such as the hon. member for Cape Breton South.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): I am sure the hon. member realizes that when I referred to him as being stupid and dishonest those were not my words. If the hon. member thinks I originated those words then I apologize to him because I would never think of saying such a thing to the hon. member. I would say to the hon. member that those were the words of the Minister of National Health and Welfare with relation to him. The hon. member cannot exclude himself from the group to which the minister referred and I would refer him to page 10894 of *Hansard* where the minister said: "Anyone who equates the means test with the norms set out in this program is either stupid or dishonest." There is only one way in which the words of the minister can be considered not to apply to the hon. member and I will give him the opportunity to get up and withdraw the statement which he made on more than one occasion that under this legislation there is a means test attached. In that way he will rid himself of the accusation made by his own minister. Otherwise he will be stuck with it and will continue to be referred to by his minister as being stupid and dishonest.

The minister, in seeking support for his legislation, has brought forward the argument that it would be ridiculous to pay senators or members of parliament, and he went to a great deal of trouble to find out how many senators and members of parliament would be eligible to receive the supplement. He said that some 54 senators and some 16 members of parliament would qualify. I suggest that when the minister uses this argument he is going against the principle established by a Liberal government. When the old age pension was granted to everyone at the age of 70 the means test was discontinued. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) was among those who gave the government credit for wiping out the means test at that time. Now the present Liberal government has brought the means test back.

Mr. Knowles: I did not give them credit for it. I took the credit for it and they agreed to do it.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): With a Liberal government in office there is no doubt that someone in the opposition would give them credit. The minister is well aware of the fact that when the old age pension was automatically granted to all at the age of 70 the prime minister of this country, Mr. St. Laurent, was photographed receiving the first cheque and the publicity was enjoyed by the Liberal party of the day.

Now the minister has said it is not right to follow a formula which was established by a Liberal government, and in fact he has ridiculed it. It is almost as bad as the ridicule which was heaped by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) on the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) the other day when he said that the United Nations has been immobile for 16 years. This was as much as to say that the Prime Minister did nothing for 16 years. The members of the Liberal party have constantly been denying and contradicting each other. The other day they even rose in the house and broke cabinet solidarity when ministers of the crown voted against the party line on a particular issue.

Now we hear the minister using members of parliament and members of the other place as an example of people who might receive the \$25 increase in reply to the proposal put forward by the opposition that \$100 should be made available to all old age pensioners. He failed to take into account the policing of the income test which he denies is a means test, and yet any time an individual has to put down on paper facts and figures and sign his name to it he is in fact subjected to a means test.

The hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre (Mr. Pascoe) has just cautioned the government not to get involved in the confidentiality of income tax returns. I doubt very much that the government can carry out this inspection system without infringing the confidentiality.

I have indicated to the minister again that he can do himself a great service by going to Cape Breton and examining the situation there. As I have indicated previously the Minister of National Health and Welfare has had considerable experience in this field. I indicated that miners in Cape Breton do not receive a pension. Over the years they have been receiving a gratuity from a company which can cut it off whenever they wish to do