

Old Age Security

last election campaign the Liberal party seemed to have the financial institutions behind them. I would like now, in reference to the question of pensions—and I am sure this is relevant—to quote from the *Financial Post*. This article is headed "Nation's Business. The whole truth not being told". This is what the *Financial Post* has to say about this plan:

What's wrong with the truth about pensions? When did Canadians ever more urgently need plain speaking and honest comment about a proposed welfare plan?

Whatever the aspirations of all Canadians for a decent retirement income, it is clear that they are now getting considerably less than the whole truth about the real costs and the real implications of Ottawa's grandiose plan for pensions.

This is in the *Financial Post* of this week. The article continues:

For instance, Ottawa has devoted much oratory and rhetoric to extol the virtues of a "pay-as-you-go" plan based on contributions from employers and employees.

May I pause for a few moments. Not long ago, two elections or the last election ago, we all know that the Liberal party criticized the former Conservative government, that they did not pay as they go; that they had deficits. Here is what the *Financial Post* has to say about the present social welfare program under the contributory pension scheme, as far as the Liberals are concerned:

But why have our federal politicians failed to make it clear that those who do most of the paying will be a very different group from those who collect the biggest benefits?

Then dealing with the very situation the minister mentioned the *Financial Post* goes on in words with which I am in accord:

Ottawa also claims that the Canada pension plan can be financed with a levy on wages that starts at only 2 per cent (1 per cent from the employee, 1 per cent from the employer on the first \$4,000 of the employee's income) and rises to only about 6 per cent in 2050.

This, says the *Financial Post*, is outright deception. They are not my words: they are the words of the *Financial Post*.

I could read more but I will end with this, and this puts them in their proper perspective as far as their change in attitude in respect of pensions is concerned.

The real truth about the Canadian pension plan is that it is a grotesquely bad piece of legislation. It was conceived in political expediency. It is being rushed into the world for reasons of political urgency.

May I ask the minister to explain what "political urgency" there is? Why was this change made? I suggest it was made because it was straight political expediency. The ministers of the present government had on their desks letters from people all across the country saying that the Conservative stand

indicated by our leader on July 18 was a proper stand. In fact, if I may pause there, I think the senior citizens of this country can look with some pride to the Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Woolliams: Well, Mr. Chairman, they can shout me down but I hope that you will just be a little more liberal with the time. It was the Leader of the Opposition who led the fight on July 18 for the increase in pensions. If it had not been for his grand fight on that occasion, which ended up in a procedural argument, the citizens of this country would still be waiting for their pension plan. That is why the *Financial Post* said that it was conceived in political expediency; that it had been rushed into the world for reasons of political urgency. They go on to say:

No public hearings have been held to examine its objectives, its real costs, its adequacy, its workability or its acceptance. As it stands now, the plan is an escalator to inflationary costs and candy for the haves at the expense of the have-nots in our society.

Every Canadian, rich or poor, now has very good reason to demand that Ottawa declare a pension pause and face up to the miserable facts about its ill-begotten scheme.

When they realized that public opinion was against this type of contributory pension, which stretched out, I want to repeat, like an octopus into financial institutions in which private investors invest their money, and when they got the protests through letters on their desks from all across the country, the Liberal members on the treasury benches had to change their attitude. As a result, pressure was brought to bear on the minister of health, and it is through that pressure that the back-benchers blame the present minister of health. But this pressure was spearheaded by the present Prime Minister. In fact, I will go further. The contributory pension plan, as it seems to be now, is a plan for the socialization of the financial institutions of this country and the working men of this country.

Now I want to go back to where I started. On July 18 last the Leader of the Opposition moved his amendment. There was a procedural argument lasting about an hour, and decision on it was reserved. We have had no decision yet with reference to that question. Then the identical resolution was presented by the government. It is really in the exact terms which the opposition placed before the House of Commons on July 18. The position taken by the Liberal party on July 18, the position they have taken as far as the contributory pension plan is concerned, and the position they took as far as the procedure for bringing about a pension is concerned, will long haunt them.

[Mr. Woolliams.]