

Expansion of Social Security

a good deal more than we have up until the present time. Therefore, I present this resolution to the house and hope the house may see fit to let it come to a vote in this hour. I urge that this house approve of the proposition. If we are going to adopt a flag to fly over our country, let us have a country in which we have done everything we can for our people. We can do it if we will try to improve our social security legislation as I have suggested in this resolution.

Mr. J. C. Munro (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, it was very interesting to listen to the comments of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and particularly interesting to hear him refer to Mr. Harrington's book, "The Other America", or poverty in the United States. He mentioned that one of the ways of combating poverty was to overhaul our social security system.

I believe I can point out that the activities this government has undertaken in the last year have gone a considerable distance in this direction. The hon. member said something about a slow moving government, but when you consider what we have done in this period of a little over a year, perhaps the Canadian people will not think the government has been as slow as all that.

Mr. Knowles: I am all ears.

Mr. Munro: That is fine; I believe that, although the hon. member's speeches have been helpful on many occasions, it cannot be said the hon. member is any more innocent of contributing to delays in furthering legislation during the last year than any other hon. member in this house.

There was one thing in Mr. Harrington's book that the hon. member did not mention and which was his basic thesis, as I understood it after reading the book. It is true he said that social security in the United States had to be revised in order to get down to the economic underworld of the United States, as he termed it, but he also put tremendous emphasis on education.

The hon. member referred to the fact that in the United States, progressively with automation and the wealth and affluence of that society, fewer and fewer people would be indulging in extensive work and undertaking the hours of work which they do now. This is quite true and it is only through education that the problem can be coped with. Mr. Harrington pointed out that the United States primarily has to examine itself and its af-

[Mr. Knowles.]

fluence to determine what share of that wealth must be directed towards educating its people, so that those people who, from generation to generation are becoming more enmeshed in the economic underworld and have no opportunity of breaking through, can be assisted. He stated that this can only be done by the federal government primarily undertaking a very extensive program of educating these masses, some 30 million to 50 million people, and further that this would require tremendous expenditures by the federal government.

Therefore overhauling the social security system is only one area that has to be tackled. I do not think it was ever suggested that overhauling the social security system in the United States would anywhere near cope with the real problem. If people do have more leisure time it is all right for those who have jobs, but for the people who have no work at all, he questions very seriously whether an overhaul of the social security system is going to do very much good unless it is accompanied hand in hand with a whole new outlook by the federal government towards education. I am talking not of academic or classical education but primarily of technical education.

I do not think social security should be regarded as all important in tackling this problem, especially in view of some of the gaps in social security programs which have been filled over the last year or so. In saying that, I do not mean at all to de-emphasize some of the gaps which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) pointed out, but I think a review of some of the things that have been done should be put on the record.

1. In the past year we have increased the amount of old age security. I am not suggesting that the government takes sole credit for this. Without the help of other groups in the house it could not have been passed, but it has been done. The amount has been increased by \$10 a month for those people over 70 years, and this is certainly an improvement.

2. Blind persons allowances have also been increased by \$10 a month.

[Translation]

Mr. Boutin: Would the hon. member allow me a question?

[Text]

Mr. Munro: Would you repeat that, please?