

Old Age Security Act

And, Mr. Speaker, the woman tries to say delicately to her children that she intends to marry again or live with a man. She is very sad to announce that to her children. They loved their first father so much. Mr. Speaker, with this bill I am all mixed up about the sexes.

At that time, the woman decides, for monetary reasons, to live with a man and that causes a family tragedy with her children. This is the generosity of this government. Who is responsible? This government which gives sparingly. Mr. Speaker, it is much easier to win elections with promises than to realize them. And my opinion is confirmed more and more by this situation. It does not matter whether one is on the government side or in the opposition, if one really reflects the views of one's fellow citizens in the House of Commons. How many times have I heard in my riding ministers and even the Prime Minister tell to the people: give us a government member it really works.

Elect a member on the strong side, on the power side, and then you will get something in your riding. Elect a member who is in power, and then you will be listened to by Parliament and I will listen to you!

Mr. Speaker, there they are the members in power! There are plenty of members who belong to the majority, who are going strong in the House. Yesterday, in committee, the Liberals were there, but not a word from them. Now they are here, in the House, but again not a word. But during the next campaign, just on the eve of the election, they will probably make that provision universal to get votes. Darn it! I call again upon the minister who is reading his newspaper, because he is not interested in looking into the problems of senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, I urge him for the last time, on behalf of my colleagues and of my fellow citizens, not to legalize concubinage in Canada in the Liberal fashion, but to legalize, to allow for the right of senior citizens to live a decent life in our rich country, and give to those in need—those who are deprived or driven to the wall because of their age—the possibility of living a decent life.

The minister will retort that they will implement a guaranteed minimum income system. This minister, Mr. Speaker, is misleading us. In his speech, he was saying that this measure guarantees, and I will quote from the speech he made on June 6 in this House:

... I should like to assure hon. members that the others in the same age group, such as widowed, divorced or single people, are not forgotten in the light of measures outlined in the bill we are debating today.

So, Mr. Speaker, when introducing this bill he said, to save face that this bill contains provisions which help widowers, widows and single people. This was his introductory speech. He did say "in this bill". Nor, this bill only concerns those who have been living together in a common law relationship, no matter what their marital status.

Mr. Speaker, this minister plays politics, he makes fun of people, tomorrow he will say "thanks to the liberality of the Liberal party"; this minister should have thought perhaps a little more of the pensioners instead of thinking of his own party, instead of uttering again and again the word "liberal" in his speech. Then, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people will regain confidence in our democratic institution.

[Mr. Fortin.]

● (1750)

[English]

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that we are to pass this bill this afternoon, and I intend to split the short time remaining between myself and my distinguished colleague, the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling).

I would like to sum up my thoughts on this bill. Let me say first, Mr. Speaker, that it is a puzzling bill. The main section appears on page 2 which defines "spouse" and clearly eliminates widows and spinsters from receiving benefits under the bill. One is forced to conjecture upon why the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) would decide to do this. Only the most cynical among us would imagine that a better program will come later but that widows and spinsters must wait for the just society until just before or after the next election.

Last night, in committee, I suggested to the minister that he might consider making pensions payable at the age of 60 to all females. Apart from saying he was not able to do so, he said he feared the women's lib group, he poohpooed the idea and insinuated that other countries did not have such provisions. I mentioned some civilized countries that do. I took the trouble today to take out of the library a book entitled "Social Security Programs throughout the World, 1973". I would like to quote some parts of it. In Australia, men receive their pension at the age of 65; women at the age of 60. In Belgium, men receive their old age pension at the age of 65, and women receive it at the age of 55. Incidentally, let me point out that miners receive theirs at the age of 55. In France, everyone gets the pension at the age of 60. With regard to Federal Republic of Germany, it is stated in the book as follows:

Old age pension: Age 63 with 35 years of insurance, or 65 with 15 years; payable at age 60 if unemployed 1 year, or woman with 10 years of insurance in last 20. 180 months of contribution. Widow's pension: 100 per cent of insured's general invalidity pension payable to all widows for three months. Thereafter, 60 per cent of general invalidity pension if age 45—

These countries are much more generous than Canada. In Greece, old age pension starts at age 62 for men, and at the age of 57 for women. In Sweden, which the minister saw fit to point out, the old age pension starts at age 67. The minister boasted that we were ahead of them, but what he did not mention was that old age pensions in Sweden start at 63 to 66 with 0.6 per cent reduction per month. It is stated in this book:

Universal pension, no contribution or income test, but Swedish citizen (except where treaty). Earnings-related pension, three years' coverage (citizens and resident aliens). Retirement unnecessary for either pension.

Survivor pensions: universal pension, widow and orphan of specified age...

Universal widow's pension: 90 per cent of current base amount if has child under 16, or age 50 and married five years at husband's death. If age 36-49, no children, and married five years or more. Full pension reduced by one-fifteenth for each year under age 50.

So you can see that Sweden also pays some attention to the plight of widows and spinsters. In Japan, men receive their pension at age 60 and women at the age of 55.

I could go on at some length about this bill, but I am willing to vote for it because it helps people who are trying to get by on one income. However, the idea that the