

*Old Age Security Act Amendment*

**Mr. Munro:** What about those who need \$125?

**Mr. Rynard:** I have come to the conclusion that the hon. gentleman does not realize what the Canada Assistance Plan is about.

**Mr. Munro:** Does the hon. member not object to some type of needs test under the Canada Assistance Plan?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Simcoe East wish to accept a question?

**Mr. Graftey:** You are going back to the 19th century; you are embarrassed and you know it.

**Mr. Rynard:** Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but let me recapitulate that the senior citizens of this country who qualify for both the supplement and assistance will find themselves with two groups of civil servants, one at the federal level and one at the provincial level, on their backs. This is unnecessary duplication and we will get into a morass of legislative difficulty.

We are opposed to this bill, Mr. Speaker. What happens to pensioners at age 65 as far as medicare is concerned if they get this \$30 a month? In the province of Ontario one month's increase, \$30, will be taken away, so instead of receiving \$30 for each of the 12 months they will lose one month's increase.

Let me go a little further and ask what becomes of the man who finds himself in a home, either in the province of Ontario or any other province? He will find the province deducting another \$30, so he will be short two months' increase. I go even further and ask what becomes of this new income tax payment for which they are liable, and what about their hospitalization? The \$30 a month which we are so magnanimously granting them will be whittled down and they will only receive nine months' payments if they are lucky. These are some of the reasons we in this party cannot agree to accept this bill. It is a bad measure.

Last night in the house the Minister of Finance added another 1 per cent to the sales tax. So in effect a 2 per cent tax is being imposed at retail level upon the people least able to pay it. This is why we oppose the bill. It is true we brought in two amendments and that the major part of one was recognized, resulting in stopping the interdepartmental snooping envisaged by the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of National Revenue. We felt this

[Mr. Rynard.]

was a terrific abrogation of people's rights. The minister straightened this out, at least part of the way, and we thank him for that crumb.

We are also grateful that some further consideration was given married couples, one of whom is over 65. If we are forced into the position of denying senior citizens eligibility for this increase and make them accept a makeshift loaf, then in the very near future the minister will find himself amidst a forest of legislative tangles from which he will find it hard to extricate himself without destroying the whole thing. It is just a jungle, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre put it.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we are opposed to the bill because in 1975 the \$30 a month will be withdrawn, and with the erosion presently taking place under this government the value of the \$75 pension will have fallen to about \$55.

**Mr. Fulton:** Maybe \$40.

**Mr. Rynard:** Maybe \$40, as the hon. member for Kamloops suggests. The only provision the government has built into this legislation is a 2 per cent erosion. But last year alone there was a 10 per cent increase in the cost of food and a 10 to 20 per cent increase in rents. So you do not need much imagination to figure out what the \$75 pension will be worth by 1975.

What are the thousands of Canadians across the land who will receive no benefit from the Canada Pension Plan going to do with a pension that will have decreased in buying value to say \$50 or, as the hon. member for Kamloops suggested, perhaps \$40? What in the world will become of them? Are we going to increase the legislative tangle in an effort to look after these people? In my opinion this legislation is so full of loopholes that I believe that in five years it will have to be drastically changed or we will have to dispense with it entirely and bring in a new bill. I suppose that in the final analysis we are placed in the philosophical position of either giving the pensioners half a loaf or no bread, in view of the fact that the government is continuing to be stubborn by applying a means test. We in this party have shown that we appreciate fully the plight of our senior citizens.

**Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the third reading stage of the bill is the stage when the members of the House of Commons stand eyeball to eyeball with the bill, with its principles