

Supply—Health and Welfare

Mr. Martin: They cannot give a power of attorney. We have had several cases like that, and we have caught up with them.

Mr. Hansell: The phrase "power of attorney" was my own, but the cheque was deposited to his account; at least that is the story. I told this young man, "Sooner or later they will catch up with you and there will be trouble, so you had better not try that". I simply mention it to indicate that there is a possibility of old age pensioners wanting to get around the regulations, and it is not right.

I come to my point, which is a very simple one. If people find there are some extenuating circumstances of that kind which force them to live in some other country, why is the pension not paid to them just the same? We do not lose anything. The only thing is that the money is not spent here, but what is a few dollars? I do not think the government could take the attitude that if they changed the regulations and paid the pension to eligible pensioners who may be living in some other country, there would be an exodus of old age pensioners from this country. Most of our old age pensioners have their homes and families here. They have lived here at least 20 years or more. It is only in the odd case that one wants to go somewhere else.

The minister is well aware of the fact that at least some other countries, such as the United Kingdom, pay eligible pensioners their pension even though they come to live in Canada. The minister may argue that their system is a little different, that it is a sort of contributory system. I say this. A person eligible to receive an industrial pension could go somewhere else to live and receive it.

The hon. member for Acadia whispers to me that the old age security pension is a contributory pension here. It may not be deducted from salary but—I suppose it is deducted, not as a pension contribution but by way of a contribution through taxes. There is the 2 per cent special income tax and the 2 per cent sales tax, which make it a contributory scheme. After all, in the long run the old age pensioner is only receiving what he has paid for, plus perhaps an additional contribution by the federal government depending upon the actuarial soundness of the scheme. But it may be regarded as a contributory scheme. I believe we have a case here, and that we have made a justifiable plea on behalf of those who find they cannot live here but must go to some other country. If they have been in receipt of the old age security pension, then they should continue to receive it.

I do not know what more I can say, except to continue urging this point. I cannot see any justifiable argument against it, but if the minister has one we will be glad to listen to it and, if it is reasonable, to accept it.

I have thought my way around this thing; I have thought my way up and down and through it, and for the life of me I cannot see why this cannot be done. Surely it would not cost as much as some people think. Surely there will not be so much money going out of the country in respect of just a few pensioners; and some of these persons might be living with relatives. There may be the pensioner who goes to live with his son so that he may be a little better off, but if it is outside Canada he cannot do it. I wish the minister would give this matter favourable consideration, because I see no reason why my suggestion could not be accepted.

This is a tiny thing so far as the financial obligation is concerned. If the minister has any figures to show how much the department is saving by insisting upon the pensioners remaining here, I would like to see those figures. But I do suggest it cannot be very much, and that it would be only a drop in the bucket when compared with the \$367 million we are paying out. I am going to keep on dinging on this thing until we get something out of it.

Mr. Quelch: I should like to say a few words in support of what has been said by the hon. member for Macleod. I am not thinking of those persons who want to go to a foreign country with the intention of remaining there. And just in passing, I do not know whether the minister is making those signs in connection with my speech, with a view to putting the skids under me.

Mr. Martin: No, I was just sending a love message to the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Quelch: I was pointing out that I am not referring to persons wishing to leave this country permanently. I have in mind persons who suffer from, let us say, arthritis or rheumatism or asthma and who get tremendous relief by going south for a few months in the winter. If they lived in this part of the country they would go to Florida, or if they were in the west they would go to California. They can drive down there in their cars and, once they have arrived, it does not cost any more to live than it does in Canada. As a matter of fact it costs less, I believe, to live in Florida or California than it does in Ontario, once a person has arrived in either of those places. Perhaps,