

*Old Age Security Act Amendment*

advertising that on January 1, 1967, the Canada Pension Plan is going to pay off and the people are going to get it. They are going to "get it" all right, Mr. Speaker, when people discover the smallness of the amount of that pension after only one year's contribution to the plan.

Then if the applicant says, "I have never been earning myself, I will not come under the Canada Pension Plan", the member may write back, "Perhaps you are eligible for the supplementary allowance under the bill we are now considering in the house". But if all this fails, then the member may ask, "Are you a veteran? What is your age and where did you serve?" Then, there is the question of the blind and the disabled, and here the requirement of a medical certificate arises.

The member may ask, "Were you injured in an accident? Are you out of work because of some accident? If so, perhaps you should be getting workmen's compensation. If you lost your job, perhaps you should have applied for unemployment insurance".

This is a rough list of the questions a member has to ask. This is a jungle, and now the government has added three more swamps to the jungle in which unwary people can get caught. The unfortunate part is that as this welfare jungle increases, more guides are needed to help people through it, because the people who have to traverse it are the ones who are least able to do things for themselves.

Each time we create a hazard to welfare assistance, the government has to employ a lot of officials to guide people and sort out what kind of government assistance is applicable to them. Then, an establishment is needed for the guides to work through, and all this increases the cost of administration of pensions and general welfare legislation.

We have been told how many people will need to be employed to administer the Canada Pension Plan. I have no doubt many more will have to be employed to examine the returns which people will be required to make to secure this increase in old age security. Each time a hazard of this kind is created, or a test is developed, it requires the employment of more and more people to assist the elderly and the disabled to find out what sort of assistance they can get.

Very soon people will not be able to travel through this welfare jungle without a specialist to help them along, and it is not unreasonable to say that a good many members of parliament have turned into specialized welfare officers. I feel that way myself. I have no

objection to it, but my goodness if I, and many other hon. members, do not have a large check list and a number of years' experience in figuring out what sort of assistance an individual should get, I do not know where the individual would get that help. He cannot get it from provincial welfare offices. They do as much as they can, but welfare legislation is part federal and part provincial. It has reached the point where very few people in Canada know what sort of assistance the average person who is in trouble can get. This is why I feel the government set off on the wrong course when it started the Canada Pension Plan.

At the time the Canada Pension Plan was introduced, the then minister was most insistent that the plan go through as originally drafted. I know she fully believed in the Canada Pension Plan as a step toward a better life for older people. But in my opinion, a fundamental error was made at that time, as a result of which administrative costs are going to become greater than originally envisaged. In addition, the plan will cost more in heartaches resulting from the filling out of forms. I believe the government should have started in another direction.

I am not going to vote against this bill. How can I, Mr. Speaker? The steps have been taken.

**Mr. MacEachen:** It is too good.

**Mr. Aiken:** The minister says it is too good. I say it is not good enough, but it is one more step in the effort to include all the needy and all the aged under government legislation. What is the next step going to be? I do not know. This is the third step. We have had the Canada Pension Plan and the Canada Assistance Plan. Now, we have amendments to the Old Age Security Act.

We did not need any of these steps. We could have done the whole thing by adjustments to old age security. But, as I say, I am going to support this measure because we have gone so far there is no other way to get out than by trying to plug the holes here and there.

The minister has called this bill a measure that will take its place with the Canada Pension Plan and the Canada Assistance Plan, within the old age security package in this country. That is a very nice set of words, but wouldn't it be easier if we had only one piece of legislation to amend, the one which has been on the books since 1951, instead of a package which keeps falling apart? As the