

Old Age Security Act Amendment

increase and they were defeated in the 1957 election. I say to them that they are pulling the same trick today. I say this with all sincerity, and I am not playing politics.

An hon. Member: No?

Mr. Rynard: Three years ago this parliament set the old age pension at \$75 a month, and today this government has the audacity to bring a bill before the house that leaves the pension at the same floor, despite the fact that living costs have gone up by approximately 10 per cent in the past year. Food and rent have increased from 10 to 25 per cent depending on where people live.

Hon. members opposite surely cannot believe that what they are doing is right. To help pay for old age pensions a 3 per cent tax on corporation, a 3 per cent tax on sales, and a 4 per cent tax on income were imposed. The government accumulated \$400 million. I do not call this overtaxation if the money is given to our people but if it is not given to them then I do call it overtaxation. I should also like to know whether the money has been transferred to any other fund. Where is that \$400 million today?

• (7:30 p.m.)

The government is playing this shabby trick. I say it is shabby. I could have gone along if they had brought a bill into the House of Commons saying: We are going to give these people a \$100 basic pension and then we will go for a contributory pension. But I cannot go along with thinking which denies these old people of 70 and over what the government is giving to everybody else. Inflation has soared during the last three years. The government gave the longshoremen a 35 per cent increase. I can name other raises they allowed because of the increase in the cost of living. But will they give the old age pensioner his just due when he is in the twilight of his years without much power to fight back? Thank the Lord there are some in this house who will speak up for them.

That is the situation. Wages have gone up 35 per cent, 30 per cent, 20 per cent, 25 per cent. Rents have increased between 10 per cent and 25 per cent. I can name one city in Canada where rents have gone up 25 per cent in the last year. Food costs are up 10 per cent. But there is not one thing for the old age pensioner. The government left him alone for three years and then brought in a guaranteed income plan with a means test. Talk about Scrooge. I will not mention Scrooge. But I will mention conscience because I believe

there are a number of members on the other side of the house who have consciences.

What are the costs for these people today? Had the government raised the pension to \$100 a month and then brought in the guaranteed income plan I would have applauded the minister. There would have been no question about my support. Where are these people living today? Seventy per cent live in the cities. Seventy per cent of them live alone. That is the situation. Let us see what the immediate requirements of people in the cities are. I have heard a lot of figures given by speakers on both sides of the house. I examined a lot of figures and I came up with this result: The minimum requirement for a single person in a city today is between \$125 and \$150. This will be admitted by any fair-minded person in this house and is a good illustration that the value of the pension has shrunk.

The minister says we do not have the money. What became of the \$400 million? What became of the last five years of prosperity unprecedented in this country with trade at an all-time high and wheat sales—I know the hon. member for Kootenay East will agree with me—at an all-time high? One billion dollars worth of wheat was sold last year. You could afford it back in 1951. Is it just bad housekeeping? What has been done with that money? If the minister wants to ask a question he can get up and ask it.

Mr. Teillet: I merely remarked that the hon. member has forgotten the five years of Tory rule.

Mr. Rynard: Well, you have not, because we were the ones who put you in shape. We straightened out the mess. In 1961 we had the first positive external trade balance in ten years. You had better go back and do your homework. You will find out who put this country on the road to prosperity and who started the wheat sales you have today. If you want to be political, we shall be political because we were the ones who laid the foundations. Who revalued the dollar? Who got all the good out of the increased trade? The minister is smiling. He knows too well who laid the foundation for the prosperity we have today. If he wants me to go back I will cite some of the figures for him.

If there are more gentlemen who wish to get up they may do so because the record is there.

Mr. Byrne: Yes, but not true.