

Old Age Security Amendment

the Dominion of Canada? Yet that is what the minister in his zeal, in his endeavour to push his legislation through, has in mind. We are asked to use the whole strength of society, the stringent means of the police and the bureaucratic establishment against people such as these.

I believe we are making a reasonable plea to the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the government. In fairness I must say that some of our pleas have been met but others have not been. We make the plea that the minister try to ameliorate the legislation in some small way so that receiving the old age pension supplement will not be a disgrace to the citizen and so that it will not put him in the position where he must crawl. He should not be placed in the position that if he has received a penny more than he is entitled to some fearsome apparatus will descend on him and squeeze him like people in the middle ages were squeezed in iron maidens and the like.

We have simply endeavoured to bring some element of common sense to the situation. I think we have tried to say that government is big enough in Canada today and that if some citizen somewhere has figured out some way to get a few dollars more, that person is entitled to it. To bring into play the whole impact and intent of this legislation is, as I said earlier in the debate, similar to using nuclear bombs to crush mosquitoes.

Until tonight I think the Minister of National Health and Welfare did very well, but when he made that fierce speech directed partly to the official opposition and partly to the New Democratic Party I think he was preaching for a call. Heaven only knows where he thought he was being called to.

An hon. Member: He is not going to get there.

Mr. McCleave: He is not going to get there tonight, as someone has kindly pointed out. The fact is that the front bench, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McIlraith), the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill), the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer), and a few other ministers here when the Minister of National Health and Welfare was preaching for a call, refused to respond to the siren song of a man who was going nowhere with his speech.

I suggest that we have gone through a great deal of debate in this house to provide these old age pension supplements. I say that we have settled the main issue, that is, whether it

should or should not be on the basis of a means test. Admittedly, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has his amendment before the house. I for one intend to vote for it because I believe in what has been said during these days of debate. We do not need partisan speeches. If I am giving one, and I am sure I am, then I am doing so because the Minister of National Health and Welfare provoked me to the point where I felt I should rise to my feet. Otherwise I would have remained silent. That is a courtesy which we Nova Scotians owe each other. Once having disposed of this issue, then let us get on, pass the measure and do what we can to help the old age security pensioners.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. McCleave: Aware as I am that this amendment will go down to defeat, I know that the bill will pass with the amendment made and that this legislation will come back to haunt all parliamentarians. There are people in this country who simply cannot understand what we have been up to for the last couple of days. When it is their turn to receive these benefits, when they realize the mill they will have to go through in order to receive these benefits, when they realize that when they fill in these forms people will descend upon them and say that they are not entitled to this or that, when they see the police descend upon them, then they are going to vent their wrath upon this parliament, and it will be a justified wrath.

● (10:40 p.m.)

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) is quite capable of making an eloquent and constructive contribution to the debates of this house when he is talking about something on which he is knowledgeable and, indeed, I thought he was doing that this afternoon during the debate on the transport bill. However, the hon. member does from time to time lapse into a narrow procedural argument in an attempt to justify the unjustifiable. At such times he becomes less eloquent and less logical with every word he utters.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Barnett: Since he has raised this narrow procedural question in reference to the amendment moved earlier by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), one should take a moment or two to deal with the matter.