

correct, as my hon. friend knows very well. I do not think he adds anything at all to the defence debate in this country by repeating periodically this suggestion, which is not in accordance with the truth.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Give us an answer that is the truth.

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE—REMOVAL OF PERSONNEL TO NEW EUROPEAN BASES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (Queens-Lunenburg): I would like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. Is the minister in a position to indicate when our air force personnel at Metz and Marville will be moved, and could he indicate the names of the new bases from which our forces will operate?

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to do so. I hope, however, that I will be in a position to make some announcement shortly.

COAL

DONALD REPORT—REQUEST FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the week before last the Prime Minister indicated that in a few days an announcement would be made with respect to the government's policy regarding the Nova Scotian coal industry, arising out of the Donald report. Can he give the house an idea as to how soon we can expect it?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources had a very useful discussion two or three days ago with the premier of Nova Scotia. He will be reporting on that discussion tomorrow, and we hope an announcement will be made without delay. As my hon. friend knows it is a very important matter. We have to take into consideration at the present time the reaction of the government of Nova Scotia to certain proposals the minister made to them.

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): On a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the right hon. gentleman whether in view of the fact that a year and two months ago the then minister of national health and welfare made the heralded policy statement, he does not agree that the time is long past when a further statement of policy should have been made?

Old Age Security Act Amendment

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I agree that we should have a further statement, shortly.

• (3:20 p.m.)

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT AMENDMENT

PROVISION OF GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT AND DETERMINATION OF PENSIONERS' INCOMES

Hon. E. A. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Old Age Security Act, effective with respect to months beginning with January, 1967, to provide for the payment out of the consolidated revenue fund and for the charging to the old age security fund under that act of a monthly amount to be known as the guaranteed income supplement, to certain pensioners thereunder up to a maximum of 40 per cent of the amount of the pension payable under that act; to provide for the determination of the income of a pensioner for the purposes of such supplement and for appeals by pensioners against decisions or determinations made under that act; and to provide for other related and consequential matters.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Batten in the chair.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, in this resolution parliament is being asked to consider a program which guarantees old age security recipients an income of \$1,260 a year of \$105 a month. Approximately 900,000 senior citizens now on modest incomes will benefit from this program in 1967. This number will increase over the next few years as the age for old age security is lowered from 68 to 65. The program will cost the Canadian taxpayers between \$260 million and \$280 million in 1967.

I know one main concern of hon. members is with the method of determining the levels of benefits under this program. Some persons have attempted to attach a means test label to the program, while others have talked about a needs test. Because it involves the provision of a guarantee of a basic minimum income, it is necessary that a norm of eligibility be employed. There is no other way to administer or operate a guaranteed income program of this kind. But I can assure hon. members that the norm is, in my view, a simple and acceptable one. It does not involve what we commonly refer to as a test of means or needs.

I am confident that members of this house will resist the temptation to get partisan mileage out of the proposal on this ground; that no attempt either intentionally or inadvertently will be made to spread the spectre of a means