

*Old Age Security Act Amendment*

I guess it is hopeless to ask this minister to be forward-looking. He is a reactionary. It is hopeless warning him about the political dangers into which he is leading his party. Perhaps some of his colleagues will have to take him in hand.

**Mr. Korchinski:** Mr. Chairman, I have been following the debate for some time and I might not have participated in it had it not been for several things that have occurred in the past few weeks which force me to say a few words at this time. The minister is aware that during the last few weeks I approached him on one occasion or another and suggested that perhaps the direction his department was following or wished the country to follow was not exactly the way that those who were in the gravest need thought would be most beneficial to them. The minister is aware that under his guidance those who are in need will be taken care of under the Canada Assistance Plan, and several suggestions were made in the house in this connection.

I know the minister will pay particular attention to my remarks because he wrote to me in regard to a question which I raised. Perhaps the Speaker did not realize the seriousness of the question at the time, but I am sure the minister did because undoubtedly people were writing to him directing his attention to the position of those who really need assistance.

I rise tonight because I am afraid that the same situation is going to develop in the case of the old age pensioners as developed in the case of needy widows and disabled persons. The minister has indicated in the past and has also assured us in this debate that he will look after these people and make sure they have a certain amount of money paid to them every month. But unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, despite all his efforts to explain the difference between a needs and a means test he has not been able to satisfy me as to the difference. Nor has he been able to satisfy those who really need the extra payment, nor has he been able to satisfy the provincial ministers, nor has he been able to satisfy those who are in charge of administering the particular section of the act that applies to people in dire need of assistance.

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** He has not even satisfied himself.

**Mr. Korchinski:** I am given an assist from this side that the minister has not satisfied himself. I am sure he has not in his own mind. If he had had his way in cabinet, and I am sure he tried, the bill he is proposing today

[Mr. Churchill.]

would not have been presented to the people of Canada in its present form.

Cases have come to my attention of children who have lost their fathers and their mothers have the responsibility of raising them. Having just lost the breadwinner these widows are left in the position where, because representatives of the provincial government who administer the act misinterpret it, they are told they must dispose of everything they own and that until they have disposed of everything they own they will be given nothing even though it may be just a few days before Christmas. I am sure the minister knows of such cases. I am convinced there are many thousands of similar cases not only in my province but in others. This cannot be shrugged off by saying it is due simply to a change in government and in attitude. The minister must accept his responsibilities. If he does not, is the act he is introducing in the interests of the Canadian people or is it not?

● (8:30 p.m.)

**An hon. Member:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. Korchinski:** I say to the minister that he had better be careful because he has done damage already. I feel sorry for the widows and children who will not get their payments under the Canada Assistance Plan before Christmas. I feel sorry for those old age pensioners who cannot appeal to their elected representatives, their social workers, their premiers or to the minister. Where can they appeal, I ask the minister? Now is the time for the minister to correct the injustices that obviously exist if the injustices of the Canada Pension Plan are not to be repeated. I do not want to go into details but the minister can look into this matter when he gets back to his office. I could deal with it further now, but I know he realizes what I am talking about. I am not dreaming up these cases. These are people who came to me with tears in their eyes. They are not people in the same bracket as members of this house or the Senate, earning \$18,000 or \$15,000 a year. These are people who really need the extra money to get by on.

For the minister to go on television and suggest that we in the opposition are raising these matters for political gain is cheap. I say to the minister that he had better look at this question closely because the means test or the needs test or whatever he calls it is nothing less than an imposition.

I can tell the minister that people who have owned homes for 30 or 40 years have been told by provincial workers: "Get rid of your