

of us might not be aware, that is, that there are provincial programs. They vary from province to province. They look after some of the problems he cited. Given the current economic situation, it would be difficult to meet the needs of all persons in this age category through federal benefits. If the spouse's allowance were provided to all low income persons, we would be looking at something in the order of \$1.5 billion. Again, that is more money from the taxpayer.

● (1630)

I would like to remind Members of the House that governments do not have money. Governments spend taxpayers' money. That was taught to me approximately 18 years ago when I was first elected to the City of St. James Council. Do you know who taught me that, Mr. Speaker? It was a Liberal, and I might say he was a very fine and hard-working man by the name of Reg Wightman.

**An Hon. Member:** Must be dead now.

**Mr. Minaker:** Yes, unfortunately he is.

The former Liberal Government did not recognize that fact. What did it do? It spent and spent and spent, and then it spent again. Then it borrowed and borrowed and borrowed some more until it had borrowed to the tune of \$190 billion. I believe that governments must have a conscience. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, if it is right to borrow money continually on behalf of our youth and our future taxpayers, committing them as citizens of this country to pay back these debts without even consulting with them. That is what is happening when we have a deficit.

I might remind the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Capps) who spoke about discrimination that having no regard for future taxpayers by spending wildly is, I suggest, a form of discrimination against the future taxpayers of Canada including the women of Canada. If we create such large debts that interest expenditures approach 75 per cent of what we borrow, then we will have to restrict our social programs, and that will affect the very women to whom the Hon. Member for Hamilton East was referring.

I think it is wrong to borrow money continually on behalf of future taxpayers. Our Government is committed to reducing that deficit with which we are now faced, and that is one of the reasons why we cannot afford to take that one extra step which all of us would like to take at this time to help the needy in the age group of 60 to 64. In my estimation, the taxpayers cannot afford that \$1.5 billion per year. Some day after our economy keeps growing and after the Government puts its own House in order, we will be able to afford that.

Because of the earlier comments of the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain, I would like to comment on some of the provincial programs that are available in Manitoba for the needy, programs which are federally cost shared through the Canada Assistance Plan. I believe this amounts to somewhere in the order of \$3.9 billion in total across Canada. As Minister of Community Services for Manitoba, I was part of a Progressive Conservative Government which instituted the new pro-

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grams and extended existing programs to deal partially with the needy aged 60 to 64. I say that we dealt partially with those needy people. One of the major steps that the Sterling Lyon Government of Manitoba took was to lower the qualification age from 65 to 55. We found that there is a need felt not only by those of the age group of 60 to 65 but also by those of the age group of 55 to 60. Furthermore, an individual could qualify for some of these programs if at least 50 per cent of his or her income came from a pension. Those were the basic criteria we established.

The particular age group to which we are referring right now is unique. I do not believe that the problems this age group faces now will exist in 20 years because of the fact that we are entering a stage in life in which both the husband and wife work and are paying toward pensions. We may have to adjust some of these programs down the road to accommodate that.

To give you an idea of some of the programs that we developed, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba supplement for pensioners which was already in existence that paralleled the guaranteed income supplement was doubled. We were a very progressive Conservative Government. We doubled the amount of money the citizens received and lowered the qualifying age to 55. We also developed what we called a shelter allowance for elderly renters, and this allowed someone who was over the age of 55 to qualify for up to \$1,448 per year in allowance toward rent if he or she fell within the income bracket about which we are speaking. In addition to that, we provided an additional rebate on education tax for homeowners or renters. We expanded that so that if homeowners or renters fell into a certain income bracket, they would receive an additional rebate on their education tax. As we all know as Members of Parliament, there is as well what is called the income security through the social allowance, which is always the last resort and is very demeaning to the individual who must receive that allowance. I hope that some day that allowance will not be required by people aged 60 to 64.

I hope that I will have an opportunity to speak on a future Bill which will provide an allowance for single needy citizens aged 60 to 64. I am confident that I will, for the more our economy grows, the greater is the probability.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Questions or comments?

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-St. James (Mr. Minaker) on a very excellent speech and one which made real sense. In spite of what we do through this Bill, and this Bill is filling a great deal of the gap, there will still be a gap because most provincial Governments and this Government have not as yet been able to deal with single women between the ages of 55 and 65. There is a real need in that particular area.

The comment I would like to make is that I do not think there is anyone who does not want to do everything possible for everyone they can help. However, the problem in this country is productivity. We have been borrowing ourselves into debt.