

Old Age and Veterans' Pensions

nothing, but it is only with dollars that people can buy many of the things they need today, even though the value of the dollar is shrinking so much. On Saturday of last week I attended the laying of a cornerstone of the Union Villa, a new home for the aged in my constituency near Unionville. It is a lovely place. They even have a greenhouse in which these people can work. This is a semi-rural area and these older people have grown up in farming areas. They will have the opportunity to grow things as they had in their earlier days. Incidentally, there is also a child care centre. I was concerned about this at first. I did not think that geriatrics had developed to such a science. Apparently, however, this is a child care centre where these people will look after the children of working mothers and so on. There is even a bar so that the old people will not have to sneak a bottle under their pillow but, can live with dignity.

Despite all the dignity these people may have, there is the terrible fact that some of them have a fundamental insecurity. Some of them are able to look after themselves. Many of us have seen parents and grandparents who, because they have known other older people in difficulty, are afraid they might end up in a similar situation. One gentleman at Union Villa, who had been secretary of a senior citizens group, told me he had quit because they were a bunch of old fogies and he didn't want to live in a barrack with old people. There is also a sad side to it. I saw two old ladies who were to be the first persons admitted to this place. They looked as if they might not make it while they were sitting there waiting to be admitted. Here we are talking about something that is within our power, and I believe within our resources, that we should look at very carefully and give high priority to in government.

I refer to the simple dollars that are not easy to raise. When we speak about a guaranteed annual income, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) does, some people scream about socialism. These are the people who run to the Leader of the Opposition when we discuss the tax reform. Perhaps a negative income tax, combined with a guaranteed annual income, might be something for the future, but we are discussing the present. Of course, this must be examined. Perhaps something in the form of a negative income tax plan could be applied to the guaranteed income supplement so that those who do have a little ahead of them do not lose it.

In so far as the veterans are concerned, I speak with a certain conflict of interest.

[Mr. Danson.]

There are veterans who are disabled and there are veterans who are inconvenienced. I am talking about pensionable veterans. I think we should take a look at and review the situation in respect of those who are really suffering and who are desperately dependent upon their disability pension. There are also those, such as myself, who are simply inconvenienced. There is a difference. I am not as thoroughly familiar with the activities of the Veterans Affairs Committee as I would like to be in respect of its study of the Woods report, although I have attended some of their sessions and I am sure the committee will come up with a report that will be very worth while. But I think this differentiation is terribly important at a time when we are talking about the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) which calls for immediate consideration and for immediate action.

Perhaps in this context we can differentiate in respect of those veterans who are truly disabled and urgently in need of additional assistance. It is difficult to say more, Mr. Speaker, because one really wants to express sympathy, if that is the right word, with the intent and spirit of this motion. It would be difficult for any of us to be against it. I regret that it is worded in the way it is because I do not think it is a motion that should be one of confidence in the government. Because it is, I must vote against it.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre on a question.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Is the hon. member not aware of the fact that the motion is worded differently from motions of this kind? It does not use the word "condemns". It was worded deliberately so that the members on the government side could vote for it and call upon the government to take action now to increase pensions.

Mr. Danson: But it is still a motion of non-confidence as I read it on the Order Paper and I have great confidence in this government.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It depends on how the government votes.

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, while walking on the