

serious. When the question was put it was turned down. How many times did hon. members from every party speak on hot lines or in public meetings to state that we recognize the needs and the merits of that demand.

All of us did that but, for God's sake, are we now whited sepulchres because we tend to forget our promises? What are you doing in your own offices, hon. colleagues? Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask them: When a person has been coming to see you for a year—if you are in your office, of course—and has been asking: Mr. Fortin, do you think we will get the old age security pension? We were told we would get it. Then I answered: We hope the minister will introduce his bill as soon as possible. Dear Madam, rest assured that we will support that legislation since it will meet your needs. It is evident that we must do something to help you.

The minister even stated, Madam, and then without partisan politics—I have many witnesses—I gave her the text where it is said that the legislation will be enacted by October 1. And she left happy.

Now we have the bill before us. It was not possible in committee to move any amendment because the minister argued it was a selective measure. Now we are at the report stage, another opportunity to amend the bill. Tomorrow we will be on third reading and we will have another opportunity to amend it.

Mr. Speaker, what are we waiting for? Why do we refuse? What did we tell those people in our offices during the last campaign, in public meetings or during radio or television programs?

Regardless of our political ties, we all said we would fight for the old age pension at 60, and not a pseudo-pension, not a pension to be given then withdrawn. That is what we plan to do, my friends. Mr. Speaker, let us act. Let us exert pressures on that minister who allows himself to be influenced by his officials, who gives with a dropper to the needy in our midst, but with million-dollar largesse to the big shots and the rich in our society. The time has come for justice.

Tomorrow morning, Mr. Speaker, or over the weekend, in our respective ridings, when we go back to them, how can we take pride in announcing that we have just made a humanitarian gesture in favour of those who have the least, those who need the most in our society? You will have to tell the truth. You will have to say that, as stipulated in clause 1 of this bill, the only way to get a pension at 60 is to have a spouse of more than 65, with whom you are married before the law or the church, or are living common law, or are cohabiting as a concubine with the possibility of marriage for at least a year, or without the possibility of marriage for three years. That is the situation.

A lady with three children, that is the case of my own mother-in-law, will not be entitled to it. For once, I would like to fight for her, Mr. Speaker. She will not be entitled to a pension, but if she lived as common law wife, or as a concubine, she would be entitled to it.

I conclude with those words, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues for their patience with me. If and when the legislation is passed, schemes and strategies will be made up. The children having grown up and married, a person

Old Age Security Act

will decide to change his home into a rooming house or commune of a kind and then, I can imagine two, three men of 65 and over going to live there and convincing three women between 60 and 65 to move in.

I have much imagination, Madam Speaker, but I am in my riding a good deal and I listen to people, I travel to all parts of Quebec and I know what they think and they will decide to live in the same house. The right hon. Prime Minister once said when the omnibus Bill-150 was introduced that the government has no business in the bedrooms of the nation. See how ridiculous we can be! Then, to prove the marital status, that is clause—I have much imagination, Madam Speaker, but I have read the bill and that is exactly what it says—there will have to be proof not only of age but also of residence and marital status. Yesterday, the minister was pleasantly saying that the marital status was his own problem. That is paragraph 1 of section 17.6. The minister has the authority to determine if you are married or shacked up: this is his authority. If you are dissatisfied with the minister's decision, because he empowered himself to do so—he is interested in people's affairs—there he says we will be entitled to an appeal. This is paragraph 1 of section 17.6.

The minister must dispute his own decision, this is again in the same bill. How intelligent it is, isn't it Madam Speaker. To establish the marital status, the minister said yesterday before the Committee that for proving the marital status, there was no need for an affidavit. All you need is an attested form or document certifying that you are shackled up. The important thing is to put both forms in the same envelope. That is what the officer said last night: putting both forms in the same envelope proves that you have been shackled up for one year. How intelligent it is. That is what has been said yesterday before the Committee.

Mr. Speaker, we pretend to live in a civilized and organized society, but this is where we stand: A man and a woman, of course it is important that they be of different sex, and this bill says it also, put forms in the same envelope, and send it to the Minister, with an affidavit certifying that they have been living like man and wife for one year and they are entitled to Old age security. If one of them dies the survivor is no longer qualified for pension. The woman finds another man within the same week and she gets her pension back. It is a good system. It is extraordinary. That kind of generous gift is very flexible, and this is one of the most flexible ministers we have had in the Department of National Health and Welfare and it will probably be the last one.

Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely unacceptable. This measure is not only discriminatory, but it is an incentive to disorganize and destroy the family unity. I can imagine the children of the widow who is 63 years old and has difficulties with social welfare and complains to her children on weekends that she cannot make both ends meet. The children do something to help their mother, but it is not enough. She needs drugs but to be entitled to them, she has to bribe the social welfare official, at least in the Province of Quebec. If you doubt this, just read the proceedings of the Cliche Commission or of the Inquiry Commission on Organized Crime to see that those officials are as rotten as those subject to these inquiries.