

Old Age Security Act Amendment

out to check applications for the supplement and to fight the contested cases through lawyers. He also wondered about the cost to the provinces to pay lawyers to act for indigent persons under legal aid in support of their cases against the government.

No one has mentioned how many civil servants will have to be hired to police the provisions of the act. Unless we are given an honest idea of the expenses involved in applying the necessary test to all applicants we cannot balance adequately the cost of paying a minimum income to everyone with the cost of enforcing the provisions of the bill.

Another man spoke to me over the week end and said that he wants a receipt for his share of the cost of giving out the welfare payments provided under the bill. He said he wants a receipt for an individual taxpayer's donation by force toward payment of the supplement to old age pensioners so that he can use it for income tax purposes. He may have a point that is worth considering. He claimed this his contribution to the payments under the provisions of this bill, which he called a forced charitable donation, should be deductible for income tax purposes.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Will the hon. member permit a question? Is the hon. member not aware that several hon. members on this side have covered very thoroughly, the question of the expensive policing of the pension plan brought in by the government?

Mr. Brown: I would like to thank the hon. member for drawing this to my attention. I am glad to be able to repeat one taxpayer's remarks at this time.

Another man wrote to me today and asked me to ask the minister why he cannot make the supplement under the bill payable to everyone over the age of 80 without a means test. I pass on this request to the minister and I am sure he will pay attention to it and perhaps move an amendment to the bill at a later date.

Another man who spoke to me over the week end said he thought the bill would put a premium on listlessness. He disliked the fact that those who had no savings, which certainly includes those who never saved a cent in their lives, should earn a pension at the expense of persons who had saved and penny-pinned all their lives in order not to be a burden on the taxpayers in later years.

All these arguments have already been dealt with. However—and this is what I should like to bring to the attention of the

[Mr. Brown.]

hon. member who interrupted me—I am putting them forward as coming from a Liberal who has stood for an increase in the old age pension to everyone across the board without a means test both in and out of parliament over many years. I should like to reserve my further remarks until the clause by clause study of the bill.

Mr. Churchill: Will the hon. member answer a question? May I remind him of a remark of the minister the other day when he accused the hon. member and others who said that this legislation contained a means test of being stupid and dishonest? Does the hon. member accept this statement from the minister?

Mr. Brown: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be facetious but I do not think the minister was referring to me.

Mr. Churchill: You are the only person he had in mind.

Mr. Lawrence E. Kindt (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that the hon. gentleman would go on with his talk because I was enjoying it very much. It was refreshing to hear a member on the government side speaking out in favour of a \$25 a month increase across the board without a means test.

● (9:30 p.m.)

I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) who tried to define the distinction between an income test, a means test and a needs test. The other day I happened to be talking to an old age pensioner who lives in my hon. friend's riding and I learned from him, not at my solicitation but of his own volition, that he is convinced from what he has read in the papers that the legislation the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) is now bringing forward amounts to nothing short of a means test. You may call a rose by any other name, Mr. Speaker, but would it smell as sweet? I ask the hon. member for Medicine Hat not to try to pull the wool over the eyes of the old folks, because they know better.

In addition to talking to the pensioner to whom I have just referred, during the past week I attended three or four meetings in my riding and the question of the old age pension came up each time. The people at those meetings were opposed in no uncertain terms to a needs test. The hon. member for Brantford (Mr. Brown), who has just resumed his seat, put his finger right on the pulse of what