

*Old Age Security Act Amendment*

for a reconsideration of what the government calls the income test and I hope that that reconsideration will result in the test being removed. We are asking for the \$105 pension to be universal. If this amendment comes to a vote, this is what we shall be voting for. We will be voting for a pension free of any income or means test, for a full \$105 to be paid to all our eligible old age pensioners, and I ask the house to support this amendment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** For the benefit of the house I shall read the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

That Bill C-251 be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the committee of the whole house for the purpose of reconsidering the income test provided in clause 3 thereof.

I would invite comments from hon. members regarding the acceptability of this amendment.

**Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe East):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments on the reasons for referring this bill back to the committee of the whole. In the first place we believe that this legislation, if it goes through, will create so many problems that within five years it will have to be changed beyond recognition. We have pleaded for an increase in old age security to \$100 per month as a matter of right because we believe in the wisdom of the joint committee and the wisdom of the parliament of 1951 when they stated that there must be no means test.

We came to this conclusion for the following reasons. First, we consider that all senior citizens have contributed to the building of this country, and not to give them an increase would be unfair. In 1951 we believed that the means test was demoralizing and destructive to our senior citizens, and this is still true today. We also believe that the cost of administration of this program would be so high as to eliminate any savings which might be effected. If this bill is passed and put into effect we will reach the conclusion in a very short time that the administrative costs are too high.

No longer do we want our senior citizens to be hauled into court as if they were common criminals. This can and may happen under the legislation. We believe that this so-called income test is just as irritating and severe as poison ivy, and whether or not it is scented it will be just as troublesome and even more so. We have taken the attitude over the past three years since the old age security payments were raised that during that time the cost of living and rents have increased so

rapidly that strikes have taken place all across this land. In the last year wage increases have been as high as 30 per cent, and two thirds of our senior citizens were in difficulty through no fault of their own.

In 1951 the gross national product amounted to \$21 billion. In 1966 the gross national product is approximately two and a half times that figure. It is our opinion that since it was felt in 1951 that the figure of \$40 was fair and equitable we can assume that old age pensions should be raised now by two and a half times which would bring them up to \$100 a month. We feel that our senior citizens are entitled to share in the growth of this country and that since they have contributed to that growth they should be entitled to a pension of \$100 a month as a matter of right.

We feel that this pension is a necessity since the cost of food alone has gone up 10 per cent in the last year and rents have gone up as much as 20 per cent and in some cases more. Taxes have gone up. In the last three years there has been an 11 per cent sales tax and a provincial sales tax of 5 per cent. Last night we were told that taxes would be increased by another \$290 million. This increase will hit hardest the person on fixed income, the pensioner. In my opinion it will increase the demands on the Canada Assistance Plan.

I have another criticism to make. I believe that the cost of administration of the program will run close to \$10 million. I also feel that there will be a great deal of duplication of services. Let us take the case of a pensioner who receives \$105 a month and for whom this amount is not sufficient. In such a case the Canada Assistance Plan will come into play. In other words, the person who requires \$125 a month will have an investigator inquiring into his income up to \$105 a month and another group of federal civil servants checking on the remaining amount. This is the duplication to which I referred which will increase the costs tremendously. These pensioners will have two groups of investigators riding on their backs.

**Mr. Munro:** As the hon. member mentioned, there may be areas in this country where people may need \$125 a month. Would he recommend a flat increase in the old age security pension which would bring it up to \$125 a month?

• (8:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Rynard:** I made myself perfectly plain. I recommended up to \$100 a month without a means test, and I will give my reasons later.