

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville on a point of order.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is that I wonder whether or not the hon. member for Hillsborough would permit a question at this time, which I think is quite important.

Mr. Macquarrie: As a former and still sometimes pedagogue I should be glad to do my best to enlighten the man. I had planned to speak for five minutes, and if I had not been interrupted I would have been through by now. But I would be glad to assist the understanding of any hon. member on these questions. I repeat, Sir, that we regard this measure as inadequate to the needs, but it is the best we have before us. We want the senior citizens of this country to get the cheques in their hands, and we think the thing to do now is to expedite this measure. As Shakespeare might have said, and I am plagiarizing him, "Tis a poor thing but their own." So far as this party is concerned we have no desire to field further speakers, except the hon. member for Saint Hyacinthe whose name was brought into the debate, unless we are tempted to do so by certain indiscretions, oratorical or otherwise. I would say let us move on with this measure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville with a question.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the hon. member for Hillsborough give the House the answer to a question that I posed to him in my speech, and that he completely missed. May I ask the hon. member whether or not he can tell us exactly what is the Conservative party policy? What is the basic pension that the Conservative party believes the senior citizens should get? Can we have a definite and numerically precise answer to that question?

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Speaker, when preparing that question the hon. member may have missed my peroration. I said we were not entering the auction room and bidding for the senior citizens. We are not going to proclaim a figure and then dance with joy when someone else puts in a figure \$50 less.

• (2120)

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the floor, after waiting an hour and a half. I did not want this reputedly important Bill C-147 to go through without my having expressed my own comments.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits and merits of Bill C-147 have been generally praised whereas the bill, in my opinion, does not seem to deserve such praise since in fact it will increase only by \$13 the amount of old age security pensions, with no consideration—and that, Mr. Speaker, is one of the main points I want to make—in regard to the cost of living index.

Actually, compared to the 1949 dollar, the 1972 dollar was worth only 56.2 cents, and as a result of the increase in the cost of living within the past few months the dollar, compared to the 1949 dollar, is now worth 50 cents. To speak of a \$13 increase seems just an absurd mini-reform

26087—23

Old Age Security Act

conceived to dazzle Canadians and particularly senior citizens.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, has to do with persons 60 years old or of the third age. I have consulted several books recently to find out when old age begins, because we are at present considering a bill in connection with the old age pension, and all the books I have consulted, and I have a few here from the Parliamentary Library, establish that old age does not begin at 65, but at 60.

When the liberals and the progressive conservatives claim to offer to the population an adequate old age pension, true to realities, they are completely unscientific and behind the times because they are five years behind all the scientists who prove, from a medical point of view, that the third age or old age begins at 60.

I have here a book written by Mr. Henri Bour and Mrs. Michèle Aumont entitled "*Le troisième âge—Prospective de la vie*", which belongs to the Parliamentary Library. To establish, from a scientific standpoint, that old age does not begin at 65, but obviously, on the average, at age 60, we can read on page 15:

Finally the evolution of certain endocrine functions: of hypophysis, such as the growth hormone, of the cortico-surrenals, extends over three stages with a plateau from age 20 to age 60.

And, the authors prove without the shadow of a doubt that, as a general rule, human beings can between ages 20 and 60, display biological characteristics which indicate that they cannot begin to maybe grow old before age 60. But, as a general rule, in Canada, old age does not begin at age 65, but at age 60. I also have here another book entitled "*La vie commence à 60 ans*". This book on senior citizens has three subtitles: "*La sécurité dans la retraite*", "*L'amour au troisième âge*"—a question we shall not deal with tonight—and "*Vos avantages sociaux*". In connection with social benefits, it is always the question of retirement that comes up and it is said that life begins at 60. And this book is not necessarily aimed at the poor, the unfortunate aged people who have to survive on the daily \$8 or \$10 paid by the government through an overworked social security plan which is always trying to give less and less. This book is mainly intended for the well-to-do who enjoy a monthly or quarterly pension which is reasonable if not comfortable.

The Creditiste party wants the old age security pension to be paid when old age begins. We do not want old age pension when old age is almost over and saying that old age begins at 65 is tantamount to misleading the population, being regressive or unaware of science and lying to the Canadian people.

This is why this bill will not solve the problems of the 65 year old people with this monthly increase of \$13 and even less those of 60 particularly when one considers the working conditions of elderly Canadians, not only of those aged 60 or less but even of those entering the labour market by the thousands every year and of those who just completed their studies.

I have with me a circular which was sent to certain ridings with a view to better inform the Liberals about the needs of Canadians. This circular was sent by a Liberal member seeking information on the advisability of setting the old age security pension at 60.