

allowances and all welfare measures for disadvantaged families and adult citizens continuously unemployed.

The speech of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, delivered on January 11, 1973, gives a summary of the results of many studies that have been carried out over 40 years in the whole field of public social security.

I think we must be grateful to the minister and his close assistants for the real effort that was made this year in this House to clear up this complex area of both personal and family social security, which is the main subject of our parliamentary work.

Looking at it from the point of view of ordinary citizens, those who most need these pensions, grants and allowances of all kinds, I note three main expressions of everyday's language: all these plans are much too sophisticated, we do not understand anything in them; despite all the increases, we are not better off; notwithstanding increasing misery, companies are expanding.

That is what the people say, this is their everyday way of speaking. Here now is how the Minister of National Health and Welfare put it, as recorded on page 197 of *Hansard* for January 11 in his maiden speech as member of Parliament of Canada, and I quote:

... that the Canadian people have clearly indicated to the House of Commons ... that the social security system which the federal and provincial authorities built over the years as a patch work job no longer meets their wishes. ... They also see in it contradictions and even some confusion and, moreover, weak spots unequal to the needs the system is supposed to meet.

Mr. Speaker, we see that the minister is well aware of the disorderly situation concerning the administration of social security measures in Canada. If there is general confusion in the pension plan, subsidies and allowances, can we say that things are clearing or clouding up furthermore?

In the amendments now before us, for instance, is the escalation of pensions based on the cost of living increase a process likely to satisfy the people who need this legislation?

I draw to the attention of the House the one following point. Even though, in the past, pensions were increased by 2 per cent where the increase in the cost of living was 6 or 7 per cent, we see here a slight improvement in that the increase will be proportionate to the cost of living increase without a 2 per cent ceiling. But after thinking about the fact that this piece of legislation is aimed at helping those on low income we noticed that here again they will least benefit from higher pensions and the rich will get more out of it. With that 7 per cent raise those with an annual income of \$7,400 will get an increase of \$500 a year whereas those receiving allowances of \$12 a month will be richer by only 84 cents a month.

● (1600)

All that is part of the same government policy which is felt at all levels. For example, they never fail to increase big salaries from \$40,000 to over \$50,000 or \$60,000 for departmental officials. Interest rates range between 5 per cent and 7½ per cent on government bonds which means that a millionaire will receive an interest of \$75,000 a year on his million instead of \$50,000, an increase of 50 per cent.

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I also point out those two striking examples to save time but I could quote a host of other items which show that it has been the policy of this government for many years always to help the rich and large corporations to the detriment of human beings, families, and small or middle companies or co-operatives.

All this shows quite well that the time has come to make a more thorough investigation not only of our whole system of social security as it affects underprivileged individuals and families living on a single man's salary but the whole system as revenues, expenditures, surpluses, reserves and privileges granted to national or multinational, millionaire or multimillionaire companies. That is the essential point on which I felt I had to bring the attention of this House if the national economy is to be really straightened out for the benefit of all Canadians. If during the last 30 years the government of Canada agreed to administer old age security pensions and family allowances according to simple and very understandable formulas for the citizens who needed it most, why not go on administering in the same way instead of submitting these pensions and allowances to a very complicated and incomprehensible system of comparisons, indexes and algebraic ratios which ordinary citizens cannot fathom?

I quite agree that the superior knowledge of the government is useful to great specialists who launch satellites towards the moon. They can use their mechanical or electronic brains to figure out the millions and billions of dollars but when it comes to cents and dollars to ensure or to complete the personal guaranteed income of Canadian citizens without work or capital, I think the people would be more appreciative of the government if it used clear figures and fixed amounts within the grasp of the intellectual faculties of interested citizens.

Everybody knows that pensions in 1944 stood at \$20 a month and today they amount to \$100, with a supplement of about \$70, which makes \$170. But now the pension amounts to \$179.16; we do not know how or why and Canadians are beginning to grumble precisely because we no longer know where we are going. I think these remarks have some weight because they are the expression of the people's language which we should try to understand, even when one becomes Minister of National Health and Welfare. I mean no harm to the minister or to his close officials who certainly have all the university degrees recommending them to the qualified authorities.

Let us leave great complicated works to high science and keep simple and accurate figures for the essential needs of the people who give their naive confidence to university graduates who control governments and big national and multinational, private or public companies which have millions and billions of dollars. All this would be possible by being simple with simple people, even if we like complicating reasonings and laws with the help of learned and complicated citizens. The greatest causes of misunderstanding do not lie between languages, but between various levels of communication within the same language. The second remark of the people concerning pensions, grants or allowances is as follows: In spite of all increases granted, we are not better off.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, when aged people received their pension cheques last month and when people on welfare