

Pensions

country. I understand the reasons for elderly people living in urban centres. Quick access to doctors, hospitals, churches, grocery stores and transportation are more reasons why senior citizens, choose to live the remainder of their lives in urban areas. However, the cost of living is higher. As the vast majority of our elderly citizens elect to live in urban centres, the argument to increase their revenue becomes stronger.

I do not want to leave the impression that I am criticizing our government. I feel the government should be congratulated for increasing the old age security pension to the present level. I remind the hon. member who presented this motion that the government not only increased the old age security pension to help our senior citizen, but also increased the basic personal exemption from \$1,000 to \$1,500. This removed no less than 130,000 pensioners from the tax roll. In addition, the special exemption for old age persons was raised from \$500 to \$600 and is available at age 65 rather than 70. This removed another 150,000 pensioners from the tax roll. We should be grateful to former Liberal governments for the old age security we enjoy today. This was not initiated by any opposition party; it was introduced by a Liberal government.

Returning to this motion, I am not altogether convinced that we should pay the maximum old age security on a universal basis; rather I am in favour of granting the maximum pension and guaranteed income supplement to those who require it. I understand from discussions with elderly people that they are in favour of the minimum pension being paid to those with revenue from investments or to those who still operate a business, but those without any revenue should receive the maximum. According to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), this is what is being done. We would be grateful if the minister would consider the advisability of lowering the retirement age from 65 to 60.

In his motion the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe) suggests that old age security pensions be paid to the spouse, notwithstanding her age. I suggest this has no logic. Knowing the pride of the opposite sex and their efforts to stay young, I would not even suggest offering them an old age security cheque.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe) is suggesting that we should consider all

women as being old, because the wording of his notice of motion says that we should grant old age security pensions to the wives of retired persons, whatever their age.

I think the hon. member is suggesting to this House and to the Canadian people that all women are old, whatever may be their age, and I certainly do not have that opinion.

Mr. Latulippe: Even if they are married!

Mr. Ethier: Even if they are married! The hon. member for Compton says that, even if they are married, they are old, even at 20. Once again, I disagree.

Furthermore, I wonder if we would be in agreement with those in favour women's liberation in considering them as retired persons, whatever their age. I certainly do not approve of this.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the hon. member who has given this notice of motion that in my first speech here in this House, I said I hoped the government would lower the pension age from 65 to 60, but at this stage, I would insist that retirement at 60 be on a voluntary basis and not mandatory so that only those in need would take advantage of it.

Mr. Speaker, I am ready to reconsider my position if this motion is of particular interest to my good friend the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe); if, for example, he intends to remarry eventually with a younger woman.

Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that each member of the House would be in favour of another increase of the old age pension. There is no doubt that all hon. members would agree to grant a pension to even younger people or to lower the retirement age to 60 or even less in some cases, but we must also consider the positive aspect of that issue. It is never enough. The pension has just been increased to \$100 but of course it is not enough because we would like to do more.

I remember that my mother did not have all the facilities available to the aged today and I would have liked her to enjoy such things as senior citizens homes for the aged and all the other advantages they enjoy today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. The hour appointed for consideration of private members' business has now expired. It being five o'clock, the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 2 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.