

*The Address—Mr. Thompson*

savings possible if only we could adopt a system of providing our public capital through the Bank of Canada and lowering the tax load. This year we are paying \$1,100 million in interest on our national debt which, if progressively lowered, could provide more than enough money to meet the extra cost of pensions to everyone who deserved pensions, and that at 65 years of age.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are entirely in support of the subject matter of the amendment, and I think this house has as its responsibility the raising of pensions to such a level. However, supporting this particular amendment or subamendment at this particular time will not do anything to assure pensioners that they are going to get \$100 a month. It is nothing more nor less than an attempt to defeat the government, much as the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) would seek to convince the public that this is not so. If the government were to be defeated and we were to go into another election, would that mean that we were going to get pensions of \$100 a month?

**Mr. Churchill:** Would the hon. Member permit a question?

**Mr. Thompson:** The Leader of the Opposition—

**Mr. Churchill:** Would the hon. Member permit a question?

**Mr. Thompson:** My time is very short, Mr. Speaker, but I will be glad to grant the privilege of asking any questions after I am through. The Leader of the Official Opposition might think that he should be called to be Prime Minister again, but I do not think this would happen. Let us be honest with ourselves. Any election brought on by the Official Opposition or by any opposition party or by the government itself would at this time cause a complete rejection of that party by the public of Canada, because they are fed up with elections.

**Mr. Vincent:** What about the last one?

**Mr. Thompson:** I say this because, if I am able to read public opinion correctly in any way at all, this is what would happen to any party which would even attempt to force an election at this time. So then this amendment has nothing to do with an increase in pensions.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Thompson:** I deplore, Mr. Speaker, that our pensioners should again be made the  
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subject of political strategy and manoeuvring, because this is what is being done. If we really want to increase pensions to \$100 a month we should get down and work co-operatively toward that objective. I am not satisfied with the statement of Liberal policy on this matter yesterday. There could have been and should have been some indication by the government in the Speech from the Throne of their intention to correct this particular situation.

Surely the government is aware of the report to be made by the Senatorial committee on aging. If I have understood correctly what we have all heard, I would expect this committee to recommend that pensions be increased. Why did the government not take the initiative and move to meet this need? They did not do so. But, again I say that just to follow through with the amendment and subamendment now before the house would not mean that we would bring about the objective of increasing our pensions to a proper level. Therefore I again deplore that politicians are once more stooping to the level of making our senior citizens and pensioners in this country the object of their political manoeuvring.

May I say in closing on this particular point, Mr. Speaker, that a vote for the amendment means nothing at all. In the second place, the issues of the recent election have been voted on by the public. Perhaps we do not agree with the results but nevertheless let us get on and do the best we can to correct the deficiencies within our nation, one of the most important of which is a proper increase in pensions, a matter which should have high priority. As the Prime Minister stated so well in his own remarks in the Throne Speech debate, "we will be judged by our deeds, not by our words".

The Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, has laid on the parliamentary table a great mass of proposals, most of which have considerable merit. How many of these projects are ready for submission to parliament by way of legislation and how many are unstudied extracts from after-dinner speeches by various cabinet ministers, only the government knows. But there are a number of points I should like to emphasize here which I think are deserving of priority. I think the government has the responsibility to lay out an order of priority for the tremendous load of work which it has outlined. Certain things must be done now; other things are more controversial and