

Old Age and Veterans' Pensions

pension payable to everyone 65 years of age or over. I would pay it only to those who qualify for the guaranteed income supplement. It should be paid to those whose incomes from all sources is below \$150, under the same system as the \$30 income supplement is now paid.

I think the supplement should be raised from \$30 to \$70. Also, instead of the 2 per cent maximum that we now have on the cost of living increase each year, we should have an increase fully measurable with the cost of living increase which would be payable to those who receive the supplement. I think we should freeze the basic pension at what it is now and in the future pay extra money to those who qualify under the guaranteed income supplement system. I would like to see that supplement as high as \$150.

I merely wanted to put these comments on the record. I support increased pensions for the older people, but I think they should be based on a supplement system. I reject a flat increase in the basic amount. I would remove the maximum 2 per cent cost of living provision, to be replaced with a full percentage increase in the cost of living each year.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, quite frequently when motions come before this House there are speakers who make cogent arguments to oppose them. This motion is somewhat different. I do not believe a single member in this House would say tonight that there is no need for an increase in the basic pension of old age pensioners or veterans. If there is anyone here who will state it on those grounds without quibbling about language or because it might be a no-confidence motion or because they believe that the pensions of old age pensioners, veterans and their families are presently adequate, now is the time for him to rise and let us know. Speak now or forever hold your peace!

For those who spoke in this debate indicating sympathy for those people who are suffering because of inadequate pensions, people who have given the best years of their lives to this country, whether on the battlefield or in the pioneer industries or services of this country, to be prepared to vote solidly against increasing these pensions at this time is not honest or straight thinking. I do not think this is even wise from a survival point of view.

Canadians are pretty sick of double talk. They are sick of hearing committees, investigations, white papers, task forces and all the other means of procrastination and prolonga-

tion being carried on day after day, week after week, month after month and year after year and receiving nothing in the line of increased pensions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. MacInnis: I wish to deal very briefly with the bald facts of the situation as put forward this afternoon by my colleagues for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin). I wish to indicate why I believe that this is an emergency situation at this time. I read the words of the motion at this point:

• (8:40 p.m.)

That this House calls upon the government to give consideration to an immediate and substantial increase in the basic amount of the old age security pension and in veterans pensions and allowances, and this House also urges that still further steps be taken to improve the quality of life of all our older and retired people.

The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) does not need to worry about his pension. That is the case of a lot of us here. If we were less secure ourselves we would be of more use to the pensioners and to the old people generally.

This is an emergency situation. Since 1966 when the supplement came into force the cost of living has risen by 15.7 per cent. That is more than two and a half times as much as the increase in the pension and supplement together, which rose from \$105 to \$111.41, a total of 6.1 per cent. By what logic can the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce maintain that he does not favour an increase in the basic pension when he knows that the cost of living has more than doubled in the period we are considering? Let no one bring forward that old chestnut—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. MacInnis: —about giving the pension to millionaires who do not need it. What is the income tax for, if it is not to bring back the amount of such a pension from people who do not need it? I am tired of that argument, especially here in the House where we ought to know the facts of the situation. I imagine the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce can find some audience in his constituency which does not realize it is possible to get back this money in income tax.

Mr. Allmand: Can I ask the hon. lady a question?

[Inaudible]