

can draw a pension for life at age 35, or 40 or 45, when they are still in good health.

I think we have to inject some sense into this, Mr. Speaker. Surely pensions should be paid as the result of a number of years of service and contributions. Even if the pensioner has contributed part of it, someone else has paid the other part. I think this type of pension should be reassessed.

With regard to the Old Age Security payment at age 65, one of the things we can do is change the compulsory retirement age in many industries and services from 65 to at least 70. Even 70 may be questioned if a person is well and able. I know of people working on farms today almost as hard as they did 20 years ago and they are now aged 71 and 72.

Mr. Cousineau: Some people of 70 still play a great game of hockey!

Mr. Taylor: I don't know about that. These people are happy, Mr. Speaker. I know a chap who took early retirement—I have to talk fast, Mr. Speaker—from the Department of Highways. He was an excellent engineer but that was all he knew. When he retired, he sat in his back yard and dreamed about the bridges and roads he had built. He just lasted two years. He took retirement at age 61 but he had nothing to do then. He had worked hard all his life and suddenly he found there was nothing to live for. That is a real danger.

We all like social legislation, Mr. Speaker. Someone made the point that lowering the age to 60 for those who are not in the labour market or who are prepared to withdraw from it is a redeeming feature of the bill. I think all our social legislation needs to be reassessed so that we can help those who need help and that we do not provide pensions for those who do not need them.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

[Translation]

Mr. Pinard: I rise on a point of order, because I do not want to deprive my colleague of his right to speak with regard to the business of the House. We still intend to proceed on Monday with Bill C-48 but we may instead decide to resume debate on the adjournment motion started today. Probably before the end of the question period on Monday we will be able to advise the opposition parties whether we will debate the report stage

Old Age Security

of Bill C-48 or whether we will resume debate on the adjournment motion. Should I know before the question period, I will advise my colleagues. For the time being we intend to proceed with Bill C-48, but I must inform the House that we may instead decide to continue debating the motion to adjourn. In any event, I shall advise opposition parties before the end of the question period on Monday.

[English]

PENSIONS

SUGGESTED LOWERING OF AGE ELIGIBILITY AND INCREASE IN MONTHLY BENEFITS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Knowles:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Old Age Security Act and the Canada Pension Plan to provide for the pensions payable under these two acts to be available at age 60 to all persons who meet the other requirements of the said acts and who are not in or are prepared to withdraw from the labour market, and also to provide for the basic amount of the pension payable under the Old Age Security Act, at age 60 for those not in the labour market and to everyone at age 65, to be increased to \$400 per month, for this basic amount to be escalated each year by an amount that will enable pensioners not only to keep up with rising living costs but to share in rising living standards, and also to provide for the elimination of any means or income test from the Old Age Security Act, so that the full pension thereunder will be recognized as the established right of all our people.

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I enter this debate with pleasure although there is not much time remaining to make a contribution. I should like to speak for more time, of course.

At the outset, I should like to say that I have the utmost respect for the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). He has contributed greatly in his role as a parliamentarian for, I believe, 35 years.

Mr. Knowles: Thus far.

Mr. Evans: But for the unfortunate hiatus of four years he would be, by far, the dean of the House of Commons for longevity of continuous service. I still consider him to be the dean of the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles: How about agreeing to my motion, then?

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with his motion. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance I have some problems with the motion. The main one is that I think that at this time the OAS represents an outlay in the range of \$6 billion per year. If we were to accept the motion and make the OAS payable at age 60 and incorporate the GIS, that would mean an additional outlay of some \$5 billion per year and would raise the total outlay for the program to \$11 billion, or nearly doubling the cost for all time.