

2. Why is it that one Canadian out of four cannot adequately fulfill his basic needs for food, clothing, housing, while others get rich in the food, clothing and real estate industries?

3. Why does it cost so much for some people to eliminate their debts while banks and finance companies accumulate abusive profits?

4. Why is it that international trade agreements are usually in favour of developed countries to the disadvantage of those countries which supply the raw materials?

**Mr. Roy (Laval):** Are there answers to these questions?

**Mr. Wagner:** We realize, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Roy) is suggesting, that the answers must come from the government. The government must have leadership and undertake to eliminate these disparities. There will no doubt always be disparities, but as long as the government has enough heart and courage to take the necessary decisions, we can believe that answers will be found to those questions asked by the bishops. But when a government is more interested in hanging on, in running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, in looking out for its left wing and buttering it up, in delighting itself in a *statu quo* situation, then we shall never get answers to those questions asked by the bishops and the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, we must also realize that the bill now before us is valid only in the short term, as a palliative, a necessity, an answer given by the present system. Thus, it is inappropriate, ineffective and inadequate because it does perpetuate marked disparities in our society, favouring one class in particular, chastising another and ignoring all the others. Above all it does perpetuate one supreme value, namely the concept of the purchasing power.

Let me quote the last part of the bishops' message on social disparities.

Consumer power has become the unequivocal symbol of a social class . . . This assessment based on financial resources creates new social gaps which are more difficult to fill than those which exist between people speaking different languages. How can we be proud of this institutionalization of social segregations?

Mr. Speaker, most of the people who will be affected by this bill, will not, I am afraid, get very much out of it, because of the steady increase in the cost of living. This bill does not root out in any way the evil which makes them, like many of our citizens aged between 60 and 65 and ordinary citizens generally, people who have worked all their lives, and have earned money that has been given out to those who already have too much. The measure of justice which is commensurate with the fundamental values of man, where human fraternity is concerned is still to come.

I hope the government, during this debate, inspired by the contents of the yellow paper or something else, will tell us about the measures to come, the legislation being considered, which will be more in harmony with our new collective conscience, especially among the youth of this country.

[English]

**Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) who, as a former barrister and a distinguished judge, I am sure was told during one of his law lectures that when you have the facts on your side you

### Old Age Security

pound them into the jury, when you have the law on your side you pound it into the judge, but when you have neither the facts nor the law on your side then you pound the table.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cullen:** That is what we found the hon. member doing. I noted with interest that in his comments he made reference to the Canadian Catholic Conference but that he would not read from its report. It was a pretty well selective bit of reading that he did. Perhaps I might be permitted to commit the same sin. On page 8 of the English text they commend the government and the action it has taken, and they say this:

● (1710)

In this country the Working Paper on Social Security in Canada proposes certain steps towards some measure of income equality. How many of us have given these proposals much attention?

So I suggest with respect to the hon. member that he should re-read that in both official languages to see if he can get the gist of the bishop's message. He said that he did not think we should become too much involved in a partisan political debate. I am not surprised that the hon. member has made this recommendation because in looking at their political background in this area his party are weak. We heard the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) talk about physical years and we heard the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) talk about calendar years, which is what his cohort indicated they should not be talking about. Then the hon. member for Simcoe North said it is not fair to compare the amounts of the increases because in 1963 there was not the same inflation.

I suggest that the hon. member is really saying that they should not have received any raise during that particular time because they did not need it. If we go along with that and say because there was no inflation they did not need a raise, the hon. member's party had 207 or 209 seats and it seems to me they could have done something to provide some help to these people in respect of the cost of drugs. I do not see one reference in *Hansard* during that period where the hon. member made the speech he made today about the government doing something about the cost of drugs.

It would seem to me that something could also have been done at that time for housing senior citizens. If that government had been doing what this government is doing, we would have had 20,000 housing units for senior citizens dating back to, say, 1958. What a giant step forward that would have been. But the Tories looked at it with their "tunnelvision", as they seem to do so far as senior citizens are concerned, and said that because there was no inflation they really did not need the money, and decided to turn their attention to something else. Nothing was done about drugs and nothing was done about housing. Nothing substantial was done to give dignity to the senior citizens in programs such as the New Horizons Program. So I am not surprised that the hon. member does not want to become involved in a political debate, because he knows, as a distinguished barrister, that he does not