

Old Age Pensions

a better deal than we are now giving them. As I have done on previous occasions, I urge strongly once again that the amount of the old age pension should be increased to not less than \$60 a month. At the same time that that pension is being increased, the amount paid to our blind pensioners should be increased and, in my view, the means test should be completely removed from the blind pension.

These, Mr. Speaker, are but some of the items of unfinished business that were left over when parliament was dissolved last year. If I recall correctly, the very last recorded vote in the House of Commons before the dissolution of the twenty-first parliament was on an amendment of mine asking for an increase in these pensions commensurate with the increase in the cost of living. That amendment, of course, was defeated by the majority on the government side; but that item is still a matter of unfinished business and I submit that it has high priority so far as the people of Canada are concerned. I support strongly the proposal that at this session of parliament something should be done to increase the old age pension and the blind pension. I also hope that, before very long, the government will bring in legislation increasing the amount of the war veterans allowance and doing something about the means test in respect of the burnt-out pension. These things are long overdue.

Mr. E. G. Hansell (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand that the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) intends to introduce a new subject. Do I understand that the hon. member for Macleod desires to speak on the same subject?

Mr. Hansell: Yes. I will take only a moment or two. I had not intended to say anything and would not have done so except that another note has been injected into the discussion. I am thankful that the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) has introduced this subject. I wish only to amplify his remarks with one or two other suggestions. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) is in the house at the present time. He interrupted the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) when he was attempting to give the minister a remedy for his apparent dilemma. I am quite sure we all agree that the minister is just as anxious to increase old age security pensions as anyone else. We have always regarded the minister as a humanitarian. Otherwise I do not suppose he would

be occupying the position he does. Yet it does seem quite strange to me that when the hon. member for Lethbridge began to put forward a suggestion as to how this thing could be done the minister rose on a point of order which, Mr. Speaker, you are now considering. I am not dealing with the point of order. The only point I am raising is that surely the minister wants to find a remedy.

Is the minister looking around for a remedy? Can the minister find this remedy within the confines of the government's present taxation policy? If he cannot, then he is up against it for a solution. There is no other argument to that. The minister can rise in his seat session after session and explain the marvellous work that his department has done and I will give him credit for all that has been done. But, after all, in the final analysis the remedy resolves itself into the financial policy that the government wishes to pursue because it is the government's present financial policy that is tying the hands of the minister so far as increasing old age security pensions is concerned.

I have heard ministers and political speakers boast before of what their government has been able to do, but I have never been able to bring myself to believe that it takes such a huge amount of brains to be able to figure out how much you need to do a certain job and then turn around and ask the law clerks to devise a piece of legislation that is going to increase taxation. It does not take any brains to do that. A schoolboy can take out his pencil, figure out how much is needed for a certain thing and then go to his old man and ask him to cough up. That is all the brains it takes to do such a thing under present monetary policy.

Mr. Zaplitny: What if the coffers are empty?

Mr. Hansell: If the coffers are empty you have another problem, and that, my hon. friend, is where we as Social Crediters come in.

Mr. Goode: Then you put on the 5 per cent sales tax.

Mr. Hansell: Our remedy is to change the basic financial policy so that it can be done.

Mr. Prudham: In other words, start the printing presses.

Mr. Low: The minister ought to go and learn something.

Mr. Hansell: I fancy the reason the Minister of National Health and Welfare rose was that he did not want this matter to be discussed now. He rose and said that there