

married couple to \$255 a month. This will merely put those people, with respect to real income, in the same position as they were in 1966. I submit this country is substantially more affluent than it was in 1966. In terms of real income we can afford to give them more than we could in 1966. By this legislation, those who qualify will return to the same position as in 1966. Those who do not qualify, 40 per cent of those now receiving the old age pension or approximately 500,000 people, will receive almost 10 per cent less than they received in 1966. In fact, they will continue to receive a fixed amount regardless of the increase in cost of living in future years.

Approximately 40 per cent of those now receiving the old age pension will not receive increased benefits because of the pension they receive as a result of employment before retirement. That amount is also fixed. In addition to their old age pension being reduced by almost 10 per cent, their cost of living will rise in the future. For those whose benefits will be increased to the same level as in 1966, their future increases will be limited to 2 per cent a year.

When introducing this bill, the minister made the astounding statement that he expected the cost of living would not rise more than 2 per cent a year, and therefore these people would be protected. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have not had a year in the last couple of years or more in which the cost of living index has not risen by more than 2 per cent, and there is no indication at all that in 1971, 1972, or 1973 the increase in the cost of living will be restricted to 2 per cent a year.

● (3:50 p.m.)

What we are saying to these people is: We assure you that in 1971 your real income will be about the same as it was in 1966, but in 1972 or 1973 you will begin to fall behind again. This is not good enough for people who have spent their lives working and building this country and providing the basis upon which most of us are living pretty well. It seems to me we can do, and ought to do, much more for the old people than the government proposes.

In the few minutes I have left I wish to deal briefly with one other matter which it seems to me has been completely overlooked in the proposals the government has put forward. My hon. friend from Broadview (Mr. Gilbert) quoted what has been said by people working full-time with pensioners in the city of Toronto, but I am sure the same could be said of every city in Canada. What has happened every time there has been an increase in pensions is that to a large extent the increase has been eaten up almost immediately by an increase in the rents which people receiving the old age pension must pay. Few old age pensioners can afford to live in their own homes. There is not a Member of Parliament who does not receive every year scores of letters from old age pensioners complaining bitterly that as a result of increases, not just in the cost of living in general but in their local realty taxes, they cannot afford to continue to live in their own homes.

### *Old Age Security*

In addition to these people there are thousands of old age pensioners who have never had their own homes, who because of the shortage of housing for people in the lower income brackets have always been restricted to living in one room or in shared accommodation in a house in the central part of Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver or in other cities in Canada. For these people, the increase the minister is proposing will disappear in a month or two because the shortage of housing accommodation will permit landlords to increase rents. I had hoped that this government, which was elected largely on the slogan of the just society, would by now have come forward with an imaginative, aggressive program to provide housing accommodation for those who have retired and who simply cannot afford to live in accommodation provided by the private market.

We have made progress. My hon. friend from Broadview talked about the one old age housing project in his constituency. There is one in my constituency. My hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre has one in his constituency, and I am sure there are similar facilities in every city in Canada. One needs to spend only a few minutes, although I have spent hours, in these housing projects which have been designed and built specially for old age pensioners, to realize the fantastic difference it has made in their lives, to realize that for the first time many of them have decent accommodation. For the first time they have recreational facilities, a place where they can get together with people of their own age, people with their own interests, to play a game of bridge or, as I saw in one of the old age projects in a constituency, a game of bingo in the afternoon, which they all enjoy.

But the number of old age pensioners who have this kind of opportunity is very small, probably not more than 5 per cent of the total and certainly not more than 10 per cent; and, as my hon. friend from Broadview said so eloquently a short while ago, the waiting period for those who want this kind of accommodation can be anywhere from three years to five years. Time after time, in the period between a couple making application for accommodation and the time the room or apartment becomes available, one of the applicants, the husband or the wife, dies. This is not something of which we can be proud. It was my hope that the government would have brought forward measures to indicate their real concern for the old people, a real program aimed at providing adequate living accommodation for them.

I wish to close by repeating what I said as I began my remarks. This is not a plan by which the rich will help to provide for the needs of the poor. It is a plan, deliberately designed, by which the poor will be called upon to make sacrifices in order that those who are even poorer may receive a little more. I think this is not good enough for the people of this country.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It being four o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motions, public bills and private bills.