

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask one further supplementary question to make sure that the Prime Minister understands me. Is it the position of the Prime Minister that a 2 per cent area of upward movement is justice for these people when in fact the cost of living goes up substantially more? In view of the fact that the money the government is spending on Information Canada would go some distance—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Stanfield:** —to do some justice to these people—

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sure—

**Mr. Stanfield:** —would the Prime Minister not reassess his priorities?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would agree that at least part of this further supplementary was argumentative. I believe the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway has a supplementary question.

OLD AGE SECURITY—SUGGESTED PROVISION OF  
ESCALATION BASED ON COST OF LIVING INCREASES  
FOR THOSE RECEIVING BASIC AMOUNT

**Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the cost of living has risen very greatly and is now almost 5 per cent higher than it was a year ago, would the government be prepared at least to introduce an escalator provision for those on the \$80 a month which would be geared to the rise in the cost of living which has occurred since last year?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, these questions were amply debated when the legislation was brought in, and the principle that the government put forward was that, rather than pay—

**Mr. Stanfield:** You had inflation licked then.

**Mr. Trudeau:** —to the aged people in this country an amount regardless of what their income was, we would use public funds mainly for people who are in need. That is the reason why we froze the OAS pension and increased, I repeat, very substantially the supplement to the very needy in this country. Once again, I say the principles involved were debated in this parliament and I cannot, without repeating the whole debate, answer the question any more fully.

**Mrs. MacInnis:** As there has been a big change since that time and the cost of living has continued to mount, would the Prime Minister still say that the people who are only receiving \$80 are not in need?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Egmont on a supplementary.

• (1430)

OLD AGE SECURITY—CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES  
ON ADJUSTMENT OF ESCALATION PROVISION TO MEET  
COST OF LIVING INCREASES

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the very heavy burden being forced upon our senior citizens because of the rapid rise in costs, can the Prime Minister say whether there has been consultation with the provinces or requests from the provinces respecting adjustment of escalation clause in the federal pensions so that they will be adequate to enable pensioners to meet the continuing rise in costs?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if there have been consultations with all the provinces. I do know that the provinces sometimes put forward an argument that the federal payments should be increased substantially but, of course, the federal payments are discussed and submitted to the federal Parliament, not to the provincial legislatures. I cannot say how many provinces have carried the argument put forth by the hon. member or under what circumstances.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Since the Prime Minister does not seem to be clear either as to the need on the part of our senior citizens—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** —or as to specific requests from the provinces, would he undertake to the House to initiate inquiries in order that he may have up to date information and be able to give a more informed answer to the House?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, regarding need, the guaranteed income supplement is precisely designed to be addressed to those people who are in need and not universally to all people over the age of 65 whether they are in need or not. If they are in need they can apply for the guaranteed income supplement which is indexed, as I said earlier.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** What is happening to the people now?

**Mr. Trudeau:** What is happening? Well, they have to listen to some of the guff of hon. members—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. A number of members are seeking supplementaries.

[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY—POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING AGE OF  
ELIGIBILITY

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Is he in a position to tell us whether his government is considering lowering to 60 the age of eligibility for old age pension and to grant this pension to the spouse as soon as