

Old Age Security Act Amendment

I have been told during the debate by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) that a whole army of bureaucrats would be required, that we would have to have a bureaucrats' building, that we would have thousands of snoopers. The hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert) said that there would be 10, 15 or 20 forms to fill in. No wonder the old age pensioners might get alarmed if they receive reports of the kind of uninformed and inaccurate comment made in this house by the hon. member for Broadview, who could have had no other thought in his mind than to create worries in the minds of the old age pensioners at the thought of having to fill in 10, 15 or 20 forms.

Of course we will require additional people to put this program into effect. We will not need a whole army, however. I can assure the hon. member for Winnipeg North that we would need a very small part of the army over which he presided when he was minister of national defence. We will not need—

Mr. Churchill: Does the minister mean me?

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) was never minister of national defence to my knowledge.

Mr. Langlois (Chicoutimi): And I hope he never will be.

Mr. MacEachen: That is hardly the point.

Mr. Knowles: It shows how mixed up you are.

Mr. MacEachen: I am sorry, I was referring to the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), who I understand at one time was minister of national defence. He was the person who talked this afternoon about a whole army of bureaucrats and thousands of snoopers.

Mr. McCleave: In his day though we had an army. Will the minister not grant that?

● (7:20 p.m.)

Mr. MacEachen: Let me tell my hon. friend from Halifax the size of the "whole army" that his colleague has in mind for the administration of the guaranteed income supplement. We estimate that the additional administrative costs which will be incurred by the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Department of National Revenue and the Comptroller of the Treasury in respect of the guaranteed income supplement

program will be \$3.6 million, or 1.3 per cent of the \$270 million to be paid out in benefits. Members on this side of the house and the government believe that this is a relatively small cost to be paid in the effort to provide an additional \$5 a month to more than half a million of the most needy pensioners and to save about \$100 million in pensioner payments. It has been suggested that the new program will involve great numbers of additional employees. We shall need more employees. We think that we shall need at the beginning, to get the program under way, some 675 casual workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must advise the minister that the time allotted to him has expired.

Some hon. Members: Let him go on.

Mr. Churchill: No, Mr. Speaker. He will have plenty of time in the committee stage to continue his retreat.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Do I understand there is not unanimous consent?

Mr. Churchill: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Batten in the chair.

On clause 1—*Definitions.*

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I have some remarks to make on clause 1 but if the minister would rather take the floor and finish what he was saying I would be willing to give him that opportunity. In particular I should like him to go into the comments he promised to make on the situation with respect to provincial supplements. He said earlier, I believe, that he would get to that. I realize that we are on clause 1 of the bill, but it is not the title. It is a clause providing for a number of new definitions. I point out in particular that it provides for what is to be known as a pension and what is to be known as a supplement. In other words, we have in this definition section the heart of this measure. There are to be two kinds of payment, the basic \$75 and the supplement. That seems to make any comments in order.

If the minister would like to speak on the question of what will happen to people who now get the provincial supplement when they get this supplement, I shall be glad to yield the floor to him.