

finance of that day as "Six buck Harris" because he offered an increase of \$6 a month. I am wondering whether we shall soon be talking about "Five buck Lalonde", because that is what he is offering people who are now suffering as a result of the heavy increase in the cost of living which has fallen upon senior citizens as upon all others in this country.

The pension increase which has been enacted and the increase proposed in the legislation before us amount to far less than the actual increase in the cost of living since November, 1970 when the Prime Minister said inflation had been licked.

● (2110)

Is it not extraordinary that three years later we are now offering an increase in the pension to meet the challenge of inflation—three years after the Prime Minister said that inflation had been licked? Inflation will lick him, and it is high time. Certainly it will have to lick him if we are to help the people, because his government is offering inadequate support to those people who need it the most.

I think we must recognize that the proposal in this bill simply does not meet the needs of those people in terms of the increase in prices and the cost of living which the old age pensioners must bear along with the rest of the people in terms of their needs as human beings. What we should be equally cognizant of is that the way in which we are increasing the pension will not solve the problem. It is not enough simply to give them \$5 if that \$5 is worth nothing. It is of no help to increase their pension and at the same time allow prices to escalate. This really does not help our old people.

The problem will not be solved simply by increasing pensions and wages. Some restraint must be placed on the rise in the cost of living. I think this government should be judged by the way in which it has brought in, at this emergency session of Parliament, a promise of a package that would deal with inflation but which does not include some effort to control prices and bring a halt to the escalation in the cost of living. I believe this bill is inadequate in meeting the needs of the people because there is no reference to the needs of those people who require government support because of disability and infirmity. If we simply pass this bill, add quarterly escalator to the old age pension system, and do nothing about those people living on a disability pension, we will simply be doing something for the senior citizens and nothing for those who suffer from infirmity and disability.

I think we must consider this problem very seriously. Because even though it requires the co-operation and agreement of the provinces, surely it requires initially the enterprise and initiative of the federal government in seeking that kind of agreement and common policy which would more adequately meet the needs of these people who number in the thousands. Let me simply cite the experience of one such person, a 61-year old widow in the metropolitan area of Toronto. The following report appears in the press:

"I'm lucky if I can buy hamburger once a week, the way prices are today," she said in an interview last night.

### *Old Age Security*

Until four years ago Mrs. Ritchie worked in a bank and took home \$117 every two weeks. Then she had a kidney removed and had to leave her job.

Now she spends \$43 a month for her one-bedroom apartment on Mornelle Ct., \$7.83 for a telephone, and \$15 for bus fare. With the \$77 that remains, she buys food, household supplies and drugs not covered by government funds.

"It's terrible. It is awful living this way. I can't describe what it's like, really."

That story could be repeated a thousand times. It is so impressive that in one of his fine speeches the minister referred to this particular matter and showed that it is important not only in his thinking but in the thinking of his provincial counterpart. For he says the following in one of his speeches:

... some provincial ministers were not completely enthusiastic about the latest increases in old age pensions. Some argued that we should look at the needs of other deserving groups such as the blind, the disabled, single parent families, etc.

In another speech he says:

In the first place, the social security plan shall ensure to persons unable to work, the elderly, the blind and the disabled, an annual guaranteed income that is fair and compassionate.

He goes on to say that one of the needs in reorganizing the social security problem in this country is to integrate the various assistance programs so that the disabled and the infirm can be more adequately supported. I agree with that, but we know that while there is provision in the bill for a legislative program supposedly to meet the inflationary challenge to those least able to cope with it, there is no reference to these people. In March of this year the following statement was made on technology and the handicapped:

Canada's bill of rights should be amended to include full rights for the disabled—

These people are being denied adequate pension provisions. I plead that we not let this program go by without some reference to the need of the disabled and the infirm to receive more adequate recognition.

Indeed we might well call in another outstanding authority, Senator David Croll, whose voice surely is heard with respect on the other side of the House as it is in the other place. He is quoted as saying in a news report:

Income-security benefits for the aged are "disproportionately high when compared with social assistance payments for other groups."

The senator also referred to the way in which, to a large degree, those who are receiving disability and infirmity pensions through co-operation by the federal and provincial governments are being inadequately provided for. I submit that the initiative lies with this House of Commons and that this Parliament has a duty to challenge the government to meet that need. I would say that on this point we might very well remind the minister of a quotation which he cited in another impressive address from T. S. Eliot who said:

Between the Idea/and the Action  
Between the Conception/and the Creation  
Between the Emotion/and the Response

Falls the Shadow.

When we look at this bill and think of the needs of the people throughout this country, particularly those who are