

vote in its favour. I hope that the hon. member who moved it, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), takes some time to learn something about the rules of this place so that in future we can do this in a different way. But as I say, many of my colleagues share both his concern and sympathy.

Mr. Benjamin: The hon. member was quoting rules here before you were born.

Mr. Danson: I am sure he was. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) made some interesting comments. He felt it was not enough to appear efficient, but certainly that is not a problem that he will ever have. I was disappointed in the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Bell) when he made some remarks about "Thirty dollar Benson". I think that is unworthy of "Two-bit Bell"; but I hope we can raise this debate to a higher level.

I think this debate gives us an opportunity to reflect on the role played by our older people and our attitude toward them in this society of ours, which really, with all its problems, is an affluent society. We have the second highest standard of living in the world. Some claim we have the third highest; but from what I know of Sweden, while I admire that country and its people greatly I suggest that Canada still has the second highest standard of living. Most of us today are living better than we have ever lived before, most of us better than we ever really expected. Yet our older people, though perhaps better treated than they were in former times, are not treated as well as they should be.

I think the approach to the matter is a purely selfish one on the part of us here. God willing, most of us will ourselves be old some day. Perhaps this is a cynical way of approaching old age, but if we can develop our society to the extent that we will not have any fears, trepidation or uncertainty about getting old, about security in our senior years, then we can devote our thoughts and energy to the future, to things which will be productive in themselves, which will help us fulfil ourselves as Canadians and which help Canada fulfil its destiny. I don't mean adopting the approach of "live for today and to heck with tomorrow".

Another reason for our approach to the elderly, apart from the selfish motive I have mentioned, is that there is nothing in it for us. The elderly themselves are a defenceless

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group and will not be around much longer to vote; no one cares much about them. It would be better to put them away and forget about them. However, we feel that, as human beings in a civilized society—and I hope we are that—we must come to the assistance of our senior citizens. The youth of course are important too, and I think we should give some attention to them but the number one priority of politicians and society as a whole should be our senior citizens. The youth have the future ahead of them. We, more or less in middle age, have problems which must be looked at and handled in the best way possible but the older people do not have time. They have concerns and one thing which concerns them so much is money. The motion says that consideration should be given to an immediate and substantial increase. Well, I realize the problems involved but somehow, as a Canadian and as a member of this House, I am not satisfied yet that we are doing all we can, particularly in view of what I consider to be the rather immoral and unconscionable pension increase for ourselves which could have been handled in so many other ways. That was indefensible, as I see it.

• (4:40 p.m.)

An hon. Member: Why didn't you vote on it?

Mr. Danson: I did not vote on it because I was not here. I do not apologize for that. I do not know what I would have done had I been here. I was at a meeting of the Canadian Tax Foundation in Montreal with my committee. I apologize for digressing, Mr. Speaker.

The senior citizens have made this country the type of country it is, in the main. We have inherited the benefits of their investment. I think it is time we gave them a proper return on their investment. I say we should give it to them, and when I say that I do not mean we, as members of a government or as politicians. It should be given to them by all Canadians of conscience and goodwill. Really, we would not be giving them anything because it is their money. They have been paying their dues a lot longer than we have. Parliament and the government of Canada give nothing to the Canadian people. We just redirect our resources in order to reflect the objectives of this society. If we on this side do not succeed, then somebody else will be sitting on this side and we will be on the other side. That is as it should be.

Previous speakers mentioned the quality of life. It has been suggested that dollars are