

Canada Assistance Plan

home, and I feel that this we owe to these people, namely to arrange programmed employment.

• (9:10 p.m.)

Further, Mr. Speaker, the record shows that if we keep this man working and keep him happy, we keep him out of hospital and out of homes and institutions for many years, and in many cases for most of their lives. This we owe the people.

I now want to speak for a moment about our older people. The minister said last night that social service workers would call at their homes; this is one of the things he envisages. This is a very worth-while measure. Social workers visiting homes will keep many people in their homes year after year. If a meal is prepared for them once a day, or their beds are made or their houses cleaned, these people can stay on for years in their own homes.

Conversely, Mr. Speaker, I have seen cases where this has not been possible, cases where people were taken to rest homes where I have seen them deteriorate, and deteriorate very miserably. This objective of the minister is very worth while. I hope the Canada assistance plan will provide not just hand-outs; I hope it will do something constructive for the social life of the country; otherwise it will be a miserable failure.

Finally, there is one point in connection with this act which I just cannot understand the minister, though he seems to take a reasonable attitude to other points. I refer to the question of raising the old age pension. I know he will say that this matter is being raised once again, but I would recall to him the fact that people who are directly concerned are people who cannot help themselves very well.

Somebody said the other day that there are about 750,000 of these pensioners; I believe that statement was made either in this house or in a committee. It is said that it would cost \$800 million, or something like that, to give them an increase. I do not agree with those figures. Some of these people are already receiving assistance, and if they receive another \$25 a month, this will amount to \$300 a year. With 750,000 old age pensioners, the total amount involved in my book is \$225 million. So I cannot follow the figure of 800 million.

I should just like to refer to an article in the *Globe and Mail* for June 23 which deals with this point. I am sure the minister must

[Mr. Rynard.]

have read this article, and I would be surprised if he did not feel that he should grant an increase to these people. What changed his mind, I do not know. I am not going into the case of those whose working lives were half over by 1940. They were then earning less than 50 cents an hour, and the dollar of that day is worth about 33½ cents today in purchasing value. For all these years the government have stolen from them by inflation, and before I leave this house for the adjournment I must make a plea to the minister for heaven's sake to do something for these old people.

The *Globe and Mail* article reads, in part, as follows:

While there are, of course, some well-to-do old people—

You know how many there are; 1½ per cent of them in 1961 had incomes of \$10,000 and over.

—every form of analysis we made or had made for us supported the very poor . . . Two-thirds of the population aged 65 and over had annual incomes under \$1,500. It found that about half of the people in this age group needed help.

Today the people in this group number about 1.5 million. That means that three-quarters of a million old persons are in need of help. The Canada Pension Plan will do nothing for them at all. The Canada Assistance Plan, when it comes into being, is supposed to help them if they can prove, each of them, that they need help; but, as Mr. Davis pointed out, to compel that many people "to undergo an individually administered needs test would be at once a costly and demeaning procedure."

The minister himself recognized this point, and I should like to put on record what he said. I am not sure who twisted his arm, but speaking at the Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax on May 25 when he addressed the Canada Hospital Association annual meeting he had this to say:

But, by the same token, I also know, as I'm sure you do, of people who have put off seeking needed medical attention because they just didn't have the money to pay for it. This is a matter of individual dignity and personal pride—

I suggest to the minister that he is making two classifications of citizens in the country today; those who are 70 and over and those who are young in their forties or thirties. On the one hand he is saying that this procedure is not demeaning to the older people; then he is saying: Come and let us know about your needs. I should like to know the psychology behind what is going on in the minister's mind on this point. I know he is a personable chap and does not want to hurt these older citizens; but I honestly feel that there is a