

Improvement Program for Aged

I have been very interested in the CUSO program. Many leading figures in developing countries, having heard me laud the young volunteers in CUSO have pointed out almost invariably that these young people are not in the country nearly long enough. They say it takes almost one year for them to learn the nuances of the language spoken, even though it may be English. They are getting under way in the second year and becoming most effective, when they are withdrawn. I wonder if there is not a program for involving some of our people in CESO for fairly lengthy operational periods in other countries. I can think of some fine school teachers in this country who retired merely because they reached retirement age. Many of them are possessed of wonderful administrative experience and I think they would be of great value in helping many developing countries establish a good educational program.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): There are people like my hon. friend.

Mr. Macquarrie: My hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre suggests that I could serve too. When I am a little older, I would be delighted to do so. I cannot depart in my prime.

I have always borne great affection for private members' hour, and it is appropriate for an hon. member such as the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock to bring our attention to this matter. Having shown interest in the subject before, he is being consistent on this occasion. In an age that thinks it is smart if you think young, which uses medical science and the whole field of geriatrics to prolong human life, we should do everything possible to enrich that prolonged life. As was said earlier, as more and more people reach retirement age it will be inevitable that more and more of them will want to live a richer life. There is no reason why in an advanced society like ours your life must suddenly change from one of routine labour to one of lassitude.

I think careful thought should be given to this matter. I will stand up with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) and vote in favour of this notice of motion being given further study. In that way the House of Commons could examine the best way to adopt the practical and clearcut suggestions made in the notice of motion and all would see the very fine motivation which is behind the motion, which I salute most heartily.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Question.

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I regret that there is only hour for dealing with the number of interesting issues and proposals suggested by this notice of motion. The hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Mather) went through the usual exhortation of saying, as he said once before, that if we want this matter to become effective we need simply refrain from participating in debate, that the notice of motion will pass and something will be achieved.

Not long ago the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who is a good friend of mine and for whom I have the greatest respect, tried to move a motion which would have added, if passed, \$1.5 billion to

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

government expenditures annually. There were 30 hon. members in the House at that time. Today there is a good attendance. I see three or four hon. members of the party of the hon. member who introduced this motion, there are three Cr ditistes, several members of the official opposition, and others.

The fact is that after debate of one hour for which about 30 hon. members attended, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre tried to add \$1.5 billion to government expenditures and it was hardly reasonable to expect the government to accede to his proposal. The Canadian Press carried a story to the effect that with one minute to go, the hon. member for Ottawa West jumped to his feet and talked the bill out, thus guillotining the hope of senior citizens across the country.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Canadian Press was right on the beam.

Mr. Francis: Subsequently, a number of abusive letters were forwarded to me because of my intervention in that debate. I support this notice of motion and want to say a few words on it. I had hoped that the hon. member introducing the matter would in his speech tell us in more specific detail how his idea could be implemented.

Mr. Mather: That can be done in committee.

Mr. Francis: I was, therefore, disappointed at the lack of originality and imagination displayed by the hon. member. He seemed to think that all old people want only to take a trip back to their homeland or travel a little and look around. I think he was selling our senior citizens short. I should like to hear from senior citizens organizations across Canada what sort of community services they would like. I should like them to examine the guidelines we have used in connection with Opportunities for Youth, a most successful program, and tell us what they want to do. The hon. member was right when he said we should consult with senior citizen organizations. Of course we should. We would be delighted to consult with them. We look to them for impetus in the creation, adoption and extension of public policy in this area.

We can make great contributions in private members' hour. I share the feelings of my hon. friend who preceded me who said he has great affection for this hour. It permits many members of the House to express ideas which are free, independent and go toward the development of policy. After all, policy does not come about because a motion was passed at a certain hour on a certain day. Policy is created by public opinion, with public debate. It is created when there is pressure for measures that I am sure will come.

I should like to know, Mr. Speaker, the area in which the senior citizens of Canada think they can make their greatest contribution. They do not want to be put aside. They do not want necessarily to compete with young people in other parts of the world. They do not want to be forgotten. In addition to their pension rights and economic security they want an opportunity to contribute in the community. They want the opportunity to show that they can do just as much as the young people in contributing to the health, welfare and well-being of other citizens.