

federal government and 10 per cent by the province. The program is administered by the Ontario Housing Corporation.

Any losses sustained by the program are borne three ways, 50 per cent by the federal government, 42½ per cent by the province and 7½ per cent by the municipality involved. I often wondered how much this 7½ per cent cost would be to a municipality. I inquired, and the response from one municipality was that this cost was very minimal, that in fact it always got back more in rents than it had to pay out in picking up the 7½ per cent loss sustained under the program.

The important thing is the benefit that the program provides to senior citizens in the form of safe, clean, low cost housing. Several of these complexes were built in my riding during the last few years, and I have never been so pleased with any federal government program than I am when I visit these housing complexes and talk to the people in them. A comparison of regular rents with those charged under this program readily reveals the advantage of it. A two-bedroom apartment in my area may regularly rent at \$100 to \$150 per month, but an old age pensioner who receives the OAS may pay rent as low as \$39 per month. For a couple living solely on old age security, the rent may be only \$74 per month. The only problem is that we need more and more of this type of housing for out senior citizens.

I was pleased yesterday to hear the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) say that the problem of the working poor would be considered at the spring conference with provincial ministers of health and welfare. I regularly meet couples in my riding where the husband is working at the minimum wage, but the problem is that their family may include six or seven children. We must examine this problem soon to see if we can provide financial assistance to these working poor. I can think of a number of examples. There is one chap who was injured in an accident and as a result could not take a regular job. He had to take on a night duty job and could earn only \$75 a week. He might have been able to survive on that wage if there were only his wife and himself to look after, but he had a family of six children and as a result had no alternative but to quit his job and go on welfare. That is something that must be changed. We must consider the provision of an improved family allowance program which takes into account a family with several children who have to be fed, clothed and educated. In other words, we must provide a supplement to low income workers. Such a program should have high priority for consideration by the ministers of health and welfare in the spring conference.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I support Bill C-147 which increases the old age security pension to \$100 a month. It is in step with the times. The need is very great among our senior citizens. It is time to make this advance in our old age security system.

Mr. Peter Reilly (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, on February 19 the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), when he mentioned proposed increases in old age pensions, said among other things:

It is aimed at ensuring that older Canadians share more fairly and more fully in the growing national prosperity—which their

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efforts during their working years helped to make possible—so they may better enjoy living in well earned retirement.

Yesterday, when opening debate on this bill, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) said among other things:

I, for one, am thinking of my 86 year old mother and my 81 year old father who all their lives worked extremely hard for their family's livelihood on a farm in Quebec and who, like all those of their time, gave everything they had for the raising and education of their children. In their humble way they made Canada a country in which one is proud to live.

I congratulate the minister for those obviously genuine comments about his parents, and those of their time, who worked hard to make this country a good place in which to live. They deserve the respect and concern of the many people carrying on in their wake. Mr. Speaker, I think of my father who died at the age of 63, short of pensionable age, after having worked hard to support his mother and father before they died, because in those days there was no pension plan. He began to raise his family at age 40, but died and left my mother without a pension because the munificent, giant American corporation for which he worked and upon which my hon. friends across the way are getting ready to lavish more windfalls, did not believe in pension plans. They did not believe in group insurance, either.

• (1550)

My father could not afford to carry very much on his own, so he left my mother to raise several children out of a family of five. She is now past the age of 60 and is still working toward her retirement in a couple of years. She is living in terror, Mr. Speaker, because when that day comes she will have to live on the amount of money that the Minister of National Health and Welfare tells us has banished poverty for old people in this country. I have sat in this House now for several months listening to the claims of the Liberal party, but that one, for sheer bunk, has to surpass any of the fatuous comments I have heard sail across this floor.

My leader and my party may support this bill if they wish, and the New Democratic Party may support it if they wish—their virtue has been so thoroughly compromised now that one more roll in the hay will not hurt—but I will not vote for the damn thing, Mr. Speaker. I think it is an affront to the old people of this country, I think it is cynical and I do not believe that any member of this House who is honest with himself believes that this amount of money can maintain a person who has no other income.

I should like to give a few figures to back up what I say. In the past four years, according to the government's own figures, the cost of living has risen by no less than 20 per cent. According to my arithmetic, the amount of money which this government, in its open-handed attitude to the people who have worked all their lives to pay taxes and educate their children, is about to hand out to them in its largesse, less the amount of money that has been eroded thanks to their incompetence, leaves the old people of this country a net increase of 75 cents a week. That is enough for a large packet of cigarettes and a couple of books of matches.