

Old Age Security Act

start treating the older people of this country with a bit more dignity. All too often we tend to be very patronizing towards older people, and to treat them as children. We have a youth cult in this country that we worship. Much advertising is directed towards young people. We say that there is beauty in youth, and all kinds of vigour and goodness. The time has come when we should cut out some of these ideas that have been so ill-conceived, and we should start treating our older people as first class citizens. We can go part way in accomplishing that by accepting some of the recommendations made to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) regarding increased old age pensions and lowering the age of eligibility to 60 years.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat pained that so much of the time on this very important piece of legislation has been spent on proceduralism and partisanship. From the very first introduction of this measure I indicated to the House and to the minister that, while I was well aware, as were my colleagues, of the inadequacy of the measure, and while I demonstrated and documented that had the actual cost of living been added since 1963 when the government took office the pension would be \$106.94, I nevertheless believed that this was the best we were going to get, and that because I wanted the senior citizens to get it as quickly as possible, it was our parliamentary duty to do everything we could to expedite the passage of the bill.

This was my stance in the committee, and my colleagues and I, who take second place to none in this chamber for our interest in the senior citizens, adopted a self-denying ordinance and stayed out of the debate. And I would have done so tonight if we did not have the injections of partisanship that we heard from the spokesman for the NDP.

I believe that the senior citizens have had enough of trafficking in political auctions, in bidding for them and their support as to who will promise more. It is very easy for a party that has no chance of taking office to promise \$200, \$300, \$500 or \$600. It is a little more difficult for the NDP wing of the NDP-Liberal coalition, which danced with joy over the \$100, to say subsequently that they want \$150. They have done everything possible to perpetuate in office the party which will give nothing more than \$100. Let them live with that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: Neither my leader, myself, nor my colleagues, all of my colleagues—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member for Lotbinière rising on a point of order?

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member on a point of order.

[Mr. Nystrom.]

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) accuses our party of playing politics, but I will say to him that from the start of his speech he has spoken of nothing but the so-called coalition between the NDP and the Liberals, which may be true anyway. He should ask his colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) what he said during the electoral campaign about the old age security pension being granted to people 60 years of age, and what he is doing tonight by refusing to support our motions to that end.

Those who play politics are the other side, Mr. Speaker. When we need their support on behalf of the old people, not only do they not support us but they in turn play politics.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This is not a legitimate question of privilege; it is a question of debate. Members have a right to participate in a debate and give their own points of view, but they should not use a question of privilege as a means of intervening in another member's speech. The hon. member for Hillsborough.

Mr. Macquarrie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) does not need a defender like myself, in view of his eloquence and capacity. I was not thinking of the Social Credit when I was talking about partisanship, as a matter of fact. I think the hon. member was a bit overly sensitive. What I might accuse them of is not partisanship. I wanted to say, before I was interrupted by this important question of privilege, that the party which I have the honour to support, and for which I have stood in this House for 16 years as a champion of a better deal for the senior citizens of this country—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macquarrie: —is not going to enter into the auction room of political shenanigans, trying to bamboozle the older people to support us when we quote figures. I will say this—

Mr. Nystrom: What would you give them?

Mr. Macquarrie: —and I will stick by it, that when the times comes—who knows whether it be weeks or months away—

Mr. Béchard: Years?

Mr. Macquarrie: —when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) becomes the Prime Minister of Canada, the senior citizens of this country will have a better deal than they ever had before.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: How much?

Mr. Macquarrie: This is a solemn commitment, solemnly stated, and I have no intention of spending hours in arguing with—