

Old Age Security Act Amendment

only \$200 or \$190 million. I guarantee, for instance, that with the present system it will cost at least \$100 million to pay those investigators. And those \$100 million will again be paid by all the Canadian taxpayers. And that is why we are against those notorious investigations, those political investigations inspired by patronage. Heaven knows how much patronage there is in those investigations.

And we want to fight patronage.

A statutory pension should be given to everyone.

Mr. Guay: A national dividend.

Mr. Gauthier: Yes, a national dividend would still be the best. That is what it is anyway, but when it is given without an investigation.

● (4:50 p.m.)

I heard the minister say a little earlier, that there will be practically no investigation, just a form to fill. Yes, when one knows what a form is. The proof is that there will be an investigation, that the first payment will be made in three months only, which means that the government investigators will have three months to go from house to house to check if this old man or this old lady has filled his or her form, if one of them forgot to declare any source of income, in short if anything was overlooked, then a reduction will be made. They will be told: According to the interpretation of the new legislation, you are entitled to \$2, \$3 or \$5 per month. That is what will happen and I want to tell the people that this is what they must expect if that legislation is passed as is. Not many people will get \$360 more per year; however, there will be a lot among the patronage handlers, the Liberals, some families I know.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, clamour all who will, but I have had enough of those inquiries. We have seen abominable things going on and some dare say there is no patronage.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Gauthier: No? Come and see our ridings. When you have armies of investigators—the only thing they lack is a red hat on their head—carrying out that type of investigation. I say that is antisocial. If our old people deserve something, let us give it to them. Let us stop insulting them and treating them like beggars.

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If an old couple has managed through 50 or 60 years of work to purchase a little home, worth roughly from \$4000 to \$8000, where they can live out in peace the remainder of their days, such investigations as are proposed—

An hon. Member: There is no investigation concerning the home.

Another hon. Member: The investigation does not include the home.

Mr. Gauthier: No. I am speaking of the present investigation system. The statement made by the minister is not very clear; according to him, money in the bank will be taxable; as for the house, everything will depend on what income from the house is taxable.

Mr. Guay: No it is not taxable.

Mr. Gauthier: Oh yes; it all depends on the income from the house.

An hon. Member: No, it is not.

Mr. Gauthier: Sure, if such house brings in an income, inspectors will visit the old people and say: Your house is well worth \$60 per month; that is an income.

Some hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Gauthier: Well, that is it. We do not have the bill yet and we do not know all the details thereof.

An hon. Member: Then do not speak about it.

Mr. Gauthier: I will speak about it, because prevention is better than cure, prevention is better than keeping quiet, withstanding everything and accepting everything.

I say that this legislation, as drafted, is unacceptable.

An hon. Member: You do not know anything about that.

Mr. Gauthier: The very principle of it cannot be accepted by reason of the investigation. We do not want any investigation for the aged. We do not want any investigation at all; that is clear enough. I cannot speak of the criteria for eligibility, because I do not have the bill, since we are only considering a proposed resolution. But one can understand, for instance, that there will continue to be investigations, just like in past years. The same method as in the past years will apply;