

*Interim Supply*

in the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It was a piece of legislation that seemed to be an implementation of the statements made in the committee on the Canada Pension Plan to the effect that something would be done for people who would not qualify for benefits under the Canada Pension Plan. I say at once, as I said at the time, that the ideas involved in the Canada Assistance Plan are good, but once again we are having to get these things on a Liberal timetable, which seems to take an ever longer and longer period of time.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare has been making a good many speeches throughout the country in the last few months. She has been in the far east and she is now in the far west. In some of these speeches she has talked about the Canada Assistance Plan and has pointed out that under that Plan it will be possible for some persons who are on old age security and are drawing only \$75 a month under that legislation to get an additional amount. The reason they will be able to get an additional amount is that the Canada Assistance Plan, so we understand, is to bring into legislation of this kind the concept of the needs test rather than the concept of the means test. This is good. Perhaps it may depend on how it is administered. You can administer the two concepts in such a way that despite the difference in name there may not be much difference in the result. However, I take the Government's proposals at their face value. I believe that the Government does intend that we should get away from means tests provisions in so far as our social legislation is concerned, and instead apply a needs test. But I suggest that it is unfair to our older people for the Minister of National Health and Welfare to go around talking about what is going to be done for them when we cannot get the legislation on the order paper. I know that someone on the other side may say to me that I am unreasonable in pressing this matter in view of the fact I have been told so often that it will come before the forthcoming Federal-Provincial Conference. The difficulty is that I have been listening to promises that matters will be discussed at Federal-Provincial Conferences during all the years I have had the privilege of being a Member of the House of Commons. I regret that after all the fanfare about the Canada Assistance Plan, which I think has the prospect of being a good piece of legislation, it is not yet on the order paper. I hope it will be on the order paper when the House re-

sumes, which I understand is to be in September.

Another piece of unfinished business is medicare. Again we will be told that this is an item that is going to be discussed at the Federal-Provincial Conference. Well, it was the subject of discussions at the Federal-Provincial Conference of 1945 and was placed before the provincial governments then in the Green Book proposals. We have had it promised time and time again. In the meantime we have had other documents including the very excellent recommendations in the Hall report. In the meantime some of the provinces have brought down legislation in this field which may actually get in the way of the proper, adequate kind of medicare legislation that we need in the federal field. I regret that all we have had is talk about this matter and that there is nothing on the order paper as it now stands. I earnestly hope that when we come back for the remaining part of the session medicare will be on the order paper and that we will get action on this subject this year.

I was glad to hear the hon. Member for Fraser Valley raise again a few minutes ago the question of the position of retired federal civil servants. I congratulate those Members of all parties in the House who have raised this issue from time to time during the course of this session. I should like to suggest that it is not only the plight of those whose pensions are low because they may not have served very long about which we should be concerned, because I think that even those who served for many years and retired a few years ago are on pensions that have not kept pace with the rising cost of living or with the rising standard of living.

In 1959 Parliament recognized the validity of the principle that pensions of civil servants already retired should be increased, and this Parliament in the Canada Pension Plan has recognized the principle that after pensions are put in pay people on pension should get an increase, as costs go up and as standards go up, to enable them to meet rising costs and to enable them to enjoy the rising standard of living. The case of superannuated civil servants has been presented time and time again. The Government has heard representations from these people and has led them to believe that their representations would be considered, only to turn them down pretty flatly as has been the case in recent months.

This is an issue on which I think Parliament must act. It is not good enough just to