

Please, Mr. Prime Minister, for all whom you govern in this most favoured land, and for your own soul, one positive step toward your "just society."

● (4:10 p.m.)

This letter is from one of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, who most likely voted for my opponent who belongs to the party opposite. Apparently he still has faith that that party is going to come through with one single demonstration that it believes in the just society. I appeal to the party opposite not to betray the faith of this man and others who still believe in this Parliament, those who are elderly and who have given a lifetime of work and those who should have an opportunity while they are young. This is why I am glad to speak to this motion put forward by the Ralliement Cr ditiste to my left.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): I rise to say a few words on the motion of the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), Mr. Speaker. I listened with a good deal of interest to my friend the hon. member for Hull (Mr. Isabelle). Knowing him well, and having enjoyed his friendship over the years, I know that he had to speak sometimes with a hollow voice.

This motion refers to the just society and we ask ourselves, what is the just society? I suppose that we could ask many people what it is and we would get many different answers. What did the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) really refer to as he went across Canada with his so-called charisma—and nobody denies that he has it—and his mystic appearance, promising nothing concrete but a vision of a new world happiness, conjuring up the right to a job with a decent wage for the worker, the right of the old and disabled to enjoy the fruits of their labours and to live at least without the spectre of want haunting them, and suggesting that those people who had to be in the chronic units of hospitals and those individuals who had to go on welfare would be looked after.

Over and over again, Mr. Speaker, I have asked when the government is going to co-operate with the provinces and introduce a form of hospitalization to cover those people confined to homes. The province of Ontario has made a start on this. I wonder if the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) is at the conference being held in the city of Toronto this week to see if some plan can be worked out that would apply cross the country so that this business of shoving people from pillar to post when they are chronically ill or old or disabled will stop.

Let us take a look and see how just this society is. There were all those young people who were so thrilled and mesmerized by the Prime Minister. But the old age pensioner had his pension frozen at \$80 a month and if he had any income, it was deducted from the guaranteed supplement because the allowable pension ceiling was \$255 per month for a married couple and \$135 per month for a single person. The poverty level in Canada is around \$3,600 to \$4,000 depending on the area.

What did the just society do about the prescription drugs which were ordered by the physician who was already being paid by medicare? The Hall Commission

Alleged Non-Institution of Just Society

report upon which the present government based medicare, contained a recommendation on this subject which was never implemented. Thousands of old people cannot afford drug bills that average from \$25 to \$40 a month. I remember speaking on this subject at an earlier date when the hon. member for Hull said that he was in full sympathy with my motion and fully supported it but that I was trying to achieve my objective in the wrong way. I have been waiting to see him put the matter right and I am still waiting. Perhaps one of these days he will put a motion on the order paper that will accomplish what he knows should be done. We know that drug bills for the elderly are likely to escalate as chronically degenerative diseases take their toll.

When the Minister of National Health and Welfare is asked about this problem he says that the Canada Assistance Plan will help. He knows, and his parliamentary secretary knows, that this plan is discretionary. They also know that the municipality has to put up its share of the cost and that the municipality has very little taxing power and practically no money because of the heavy welfare rolls being carried at the present time. With well over 600,000 people unemployed, the welfare rolls are being taxed to the utmost in most places. The municipalities simply have not the power to raise the money to carry their share of the cost of this discretionary legislation.

How just is any government that taxes its working people 4 per cent for their old age pension and which had accumulated, up to last fall, a surplus of \$800 million in the pension fund? This same government freezes the old age pension at \$80 a month and says that if a person has any other income he will not be entitled to the cost of living supplement. Year after year the \$80 will be eroded. I would not like to accuse this government of stealing, but it boils down to just that.

A case was drawn to my attention the other day which causes to question the just society. A Mr. "Y" lost his wife about a year ago. He has a pension from the Department of Transport of \$900 a year and receives \$960 a year from the old age pension. He owns a small home on which he pays \$250 a year in taxes. He pays \$300 a year for drugs because of a cardiovascular disease and is crippled with arthritis. Fuel and electricity cost \$300 a year. Having somebody come in and clean the house, cut the grass and look after the place outside costs around \$500 a year. He has to go to the doctor once a month to have his medicine regulated and this cost him \$5 for a taxi each time. His total expenses are \$1,410 and his total income is \$1,860.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Rynard: This man's income tax exemption is \$1,100, the same as it was in 1948, though there has been something like a 70 per cent increase in the cost of living. But here we are beating the poor people, and we have over four million of them in Canada.

Then, what about those young boys and girls who looked with such fervor at the just society, but who today find themselves without jobs and with a dim hope