

month for a person of single status and \$350 a month for a married couple. This is no more outrageous or surprising than it was many years ago when we asked that retirement pensions should be increased from \$30 to \$50, but got only \$40. The \$100 a month we are now paying to our senior citizens is not good enough in light of today's cost of living and productivity. I support the hon. member for Compton, and urge that we should look at those higher figures.

With respect to the Canada Pension Plan, which is also mentioned in the motion before us, I think it is extremely important that we get the eligible age down to 60, again on a voluntary basis. I think it is extremely important that we get the YMPE—the yearly maximum pensionable earnings figure—to a much higher figure, so that the pension that people will draw under the Canada Pension Plan will be higher.

I also think it is crucial to get that 2 per cent ceiling on the annual escalation under the Canada Pension Plan removed. I thought from the way the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) was talking early in 1973 that there was no question but that that would be done before the end of 1973, so that the escalation could take place in 1974 to equal the actual rise in the cost of living. From the way that minister has been talking lately, there seems to be some doubt about it. Sure, he puts the blame on the provinces and writes letters to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* to explain the delay; but the fact of the matter is that Canadians who are receiving the Canada Pension Plan were led to believe in the early part of this session that by 1974 the escalation under the Canada Pension Plan would not be limited to 2 per cent but would be equal to the full percentage rise in the cost of living.

This is crucial not only with respect to the Canada Pension Plan itself; it is crucial also in connection with the government's thinking about other pensions that are not already escalating by the full amount of the increase in the cost of living but are geared to this pension.

When we tried to get the pensions of retired public servants increased, we were told no, we will have to wait until this has been done in the Canada Pension Plan. When we asked for this for retired RCMP personnel, we got the same answer. When we asked for this for retired armed forces personnel, we were given the same answer again. When we said that the pensions of Canadian National Railways employees should be escalated at more than 2 per cent a year, we were told it cannot be done because the federal government has laid down a dictum against their doing it. The fact is that this has been done. The government has sneaked into the income tax regulations a provision to the effect that no private pension plan can be registered for income tax purposes unless it limits any escalation to 2 per cent per year.

That may have been all right in a decade when the cost of living did not go up by more than 2 or 3 per cent per year, but it is not good enough when it goes up 4, 5, 6 or 7 per cent per year. Maintaining the 2 per cent ceiling is saying to thousands of our pensioners, "You are doomed to getting less and less as the years go by," instead of saying to them that their pensions will be allowed to go up so that they can enjoy an improvement in their standard of living.

Pensions

I regard all these measures as very important. If I may summarize, they come under three or four headings. First, the pensionable age should be lowered with respect both to old age security and the Canada Pension Plan. I also think that this should be done on a voluntary basis. Second, there must be a substantial increase in the amounts paid under old age security, and the same applies to the Canada Pension Plan. This can be achieved by raising the level of the yearly maximum pensionable earnings. Finally, there is an urgent need to remove the 2 per cent ceiling, wherever it exists, so that all our people who are on pensions of any kind, anywhere in Canada, can enjoy each year an escalation that is at least equal to the increase in the cost of living.

Mr. Denis Ethier (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, I certainly share the views of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who has shown concern for the elderly people of this country. I am sure that every member of this House who shares his views also shares his concern about our senior citizens.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe), one wonders whether he is really serious. On the one hand, he talks very logically about bringing the pension age down to 60 but, at the same time, he forsakes all logic in his suggestion that old age pensions be paid to the wives of retired persons, whatever their age.

[English]

Here I am referring to the purpose of this motion, which I understand is to help Canadian citizens when they reach the age of 60. That proposal seems to be very logical and, if I may say so, is one to be recommended for many reasons.

I suggest that men and women who have worked all their lives up to 60 have given not only the best years of their lives to their country but also part of their health. With the ever-pressing demands of industry for increased productivity, I feel that the men and women on the labour market who are caught by this demand for increased productivity should be given the choice to retire if they so wish. However, there are a great number of citizens in this country who would not want to retire at age 60. This motion reads:

● (1650)

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Old Age Security Act and the Canada Pension Plan Act so that pensions provided under the two legislations be paid to—

Then the next part should read "persons who have reached age 60 who have no revenue or source of revenue and wish to retire". It continues:

—and be increased to \$200 a month for a single person and a married man and to \$150 a month for a wife, notwithstanding her age.

This, as I have said, should apply to those with no source of revenue.

Another reason for supporting this bill, if it were worded correctly, is the ever-increasing cost of living, especially for senior citizens living in urban areas where the cost of living is higher than in rural parts of the