

Disabled Persons Act

four years there has been a vast increase. Instead of indulging in generalities, why do the opposition not say who they would have cut out of the extra amounts that have been paid by this government?

I shall go back to what was said in 1957. The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate interrupted me a minute ago. I think he has been under two flags. On October 25, 1957, when we were dealing with the \$9 increase, he had some remarks to make. The \$6 increase permitted the surplus which they had in 1956 but, according to members of the opposition, that was all that could be given then. On October 25, 1957 the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate said:

I want to make a very few observations on the proposed legislation and I say at once, sir, I am going to support it.

Mr. Pickersgill: That is right.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Then he went on to say: I am going to support it—

He repeats himself—

—but it does present a real problem for all of us who are conscientious representatives of constituents on the Atlantic seaboard. The effect of the legislation the government is now proposing will be—perhaps not for anyone more than myself and the hon. members for Burin-Burgeo and Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador—to give to the retired adults in many of our communities larger incomes than those of the working members of their families who have to contribute through the sales tax towards the payment of these pensions.

That was a strange argument to advance, that when we increased the old age pension by \$9 the result was going to create difficulty for the hon. member. That, at least, affords an excuse for him. It shows why, when he was a member of the government, he allowed that government to increase old age pensions by only \$6 in 1957.

I could quote from other remarks made at that time. I quote the hon. member for Essex East, but I shall do no more than quote from him because he is not with us today. On March 22, 1957 he said at page 2607 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, the budget debate is of more than usual significance this year.

He then went on to deal with the pensions, the amounts and so forth, and he wound up by saying:

If anyone will examine the situation and what has happened to the cost of living since 1952 he will see that the increase in the amount of pensions—15 per cent in its total effect—is very greatly in excess of the relatively slight increase that has taken place in the cost of living in that period.

This was at a time when the Liberal government had great surpluses. How did they get them? By starving those in need, by starving the blind, and by starving those who were

crippled. I should like to read some more quotations. The hon. member for Essex East continued:

What we on this side have sought to do is not to give in to the reckless demands of my hon. friend—

—some member of the C.C.F. party had asked for \$75, and the hon. member for Essex East replied by saying:

What we on this side have sought to do is not to give in to the reckless demands of my hon. friend nor have we on the other hand heeded the reactionary attitudes of others in this house. We have sought in accordance with what we believe to be our capacity to meet the need which we think exists in this country and I have no doubt that the people of Canada regard the attitude which we take in this matter as the responsible and proper attitude for us to assume.

In effect he said that \$6 a month was all the then government could afford. Then there was an interruption:

Mr. Knowles: Forty six dollars a month is the freedom to starve.

Mr. Martin: My hon. friend says, "the freedom to starve." I will tell my hon. friend, for whom I have a high personal regard as he knows, that by the excessive demands that he has made from time to time he has made it more difficult in so far as getting acceptance of some of these measures is concerned.

In other words, anyone who wanted more than \$6 was making it more difficult for the then minister of national health and welfare to increase the amount beyond \$6. What a difference took place later in 1957, as recorded at page 669 of *Hansard* for 1957-58:

Mr. McCleave: Your view of the \$6 has changed also.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): My hon. friend will find if he is in this house as long as I have been that one of the best ways to get along is to recognize that you have to change your views.

That was an admission, and possibly it explains the change which has taken place in recent years.

Let us look at the record. I shall deal with the expenditures in each of the years 1956-57 and 1961-62. Our social justice payments for those two years include veterans pension allowance benefits but do not cover pensions paid to civil servants. I have already stated that a relatively small portion of the increase between those two comparative years resulted from the increases that were made in February, March and April of 1957, but the figures are as follows. For old age security payments, from \$379.1 million to \$606.6 million, an increase of 60 per cent. For old age assistance payments the federal share increased from \$20.3 million to \$30.7 million, an increase of 51 per cent. For blind and disability allowances the federal share has risen from \$10.1 million to \$20.3 million, an increase of 101 per cent; and that is before any consideration is given to