

the history of old age pensions need only listen to members of the Liberal party and the New Democratic Party trying to claim to be the parents of that act. The New Democratic Party claim that they are the true and only sons and daughters of the CCF whose parentage is a little cloudier. In 1927 the Liberals were sustained by the Progressive party, as they are now by the NDP. Many of the Progressives became Liberals—some became Progressive Liberals, some became Senators and some faded away, but there was a kernel there which after being buried on the Prairies for six years, became the CCF. For them to claim that, through Mr. Woodsworth, they were the instigators of the old age pension is rather like claiming responsibility for this measure because of Hazen Argue.

We know that the Liberal party introduced this bill under a certain amount of pressure; I should like to think it was from the Progressives who went over to the Liberal party. In any case, old age pensions were introduced some 20 years after having been enacted in England. The New Democratic Party claim that, as a result of the CCF party being born in 1933, they had some peculiar prenatal influence on this legislation. When I say "prenatal" I mean that in a little different sense from the normal; they claim the unborn baby of the CCF somehow influenced the legislation six years before it was born.

I listened with interest to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) discussing the early days of the pension and he cleared up one point for me. I assumed the pension had gone from \$20 to \$40 in one jump, so I am glad to learn from his remarks that it went from \$20 to \$30. That, of course, is a jump of 50 per cent but the minister stated yesterday that the present rise is the greatest in pensions since the year one. I submit that a rise from \$20 to \$30, being 50 per cent and ten hard dollars, may have meant more to recipients than the rise today of \$13.39.

• (1440)

Elections followed in the natural course and, by a strange co-incidence, increases in the old age pension seemed to coincide more nearly with elections than with any other events in our history. Pensions increased to \$40 and then to \$46 just before the Liberal debacle of 1957; and, from \$46 they went to \$61. For the benefit of the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) who, when talking about people in elderly brackets, referred to the penuriousness of the Conservative government, may I point out that a Victoria radio station every year holds an open line contest as to who is the most popular living Canadian. Many elderly people listen to this program and answer and ask questions on it. They make up about one third of our population. The most popular living Canadian in the minds of the elderly of Victoria is the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker).

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKinnon: His government was the first to adopt the idea that old age pensions could be raised substantially, if necessary; and that was certainly necessary in those days. So, the pension went up to \$61. In 1962, it was raised by another \$10, according to the minister. Then, in 1963 it

Old Age Security Act

was again raised by \$10. This is when history apparently started because, if you accept the minister's calculation with respect to the \$15 and \$10 raise in pensions, the pension in 1962 must have been \$65.

If this bill passes, and it is sponsored by a reluctant government, the pension will increase slightly. The difference between \$65 and \$82.88 is not great, dollar-wise or percentage-wise, especially when you consider that government revenues in the same period have just about tripled, to judge from the estimates. This year the government will spend more than \$20 billion; in 1962 government expenditure was around \$7 billion. If the old age pension were to increase at the same rate as the government's revenues increase, the old age pensioner would be feeling about as fat and happy as the government feels.

The next question is, can we afford substantial increases? There was much talk in the election campaign about the size of the old age pension and about how much it should be increased. We heard lots about this from the NDP. I am baffled as to why the NDP should continually be asking my party how much increase it would have given old age pensioners. Why did they not ask the Liberals how much they promised?

An hon. Member: We did.

Mr. McKinnon: I will tell you why they do not ask. The Liberals did not promise a red cent; not a penny, and it is ludicrous for the NDP to give their unquestioned loyalty to the party which, during the election campaign, did not promise a single extra penny to old age pensioners. If the Liberals were not in their present perilous position, it is probable that they would not have given a penny extra.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKinnon: There has been some talk about how much my leader promised during the election campaign. I wish to put my version of the facts on record. In Victoria the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) met the press at a press conference about the first of September and he said that a \$10 increase might have been enough to compensate for the increased cost of living in April or May. By September, the cost of living had accelerated rapidly and my leader said that he thought \$15 should be the amount of the increase. Let me point out that \$15 and \$82.88 comes to \$97.88. That was our suggested figure on September 1, in view of the way costs were escalating.

Our leader refused to participate in the auction on old age pensions. It is very easy for the party on our left to suggest that \$150 should be paid, but it is not so easy for a party that is likely to assume power to make such promises. None the less, we all expected a great deal more from the Liberal party than we have been given so far. So, in future I would appreciate it if the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), when speaking on what the party I support promised the old age pensioner, would be more factual in their statements. The figure was \$97.88.

Let us now consider modern times. Yesterday I consulted *Hansard* and looked at the speech made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I read over the words