

Old Age Assistance Act

people who, because of their age, are no longer employable, and that is a factor which is changing very rapidly. There are many people in my own area seeking work at the age of 50, but they are not employable in terms of employers' interests. They apply for jobs, they are physically capable of doing them, but they are told they are too old. Indeed, in the mining field not only are they too old at 50 years but they are too old at 40, and some of the mines are raising their standards until prospective employees are told they are too old if they are nearing the age of 40.

The changes in technocracy and the changes in the employment picture are creating a demand for an immediate start on a contributory pension scheme, letting workers contribute from their earnings so that in many cases they will be granted an opportunity of working beyond what is now considered the acceptable age of employment. The fact that they would be contributing to a pension plan would mean their age would no longer be a factor, and would extend their employment.

This matter has been considered many times by governments in the hope that they would find a solution for the problem without getting involved in it themselves. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that a few years ago the Liberal government, through the then minister of national revenue, circulated a statement on principles and rules respecting pension plans for the purposes of income tax. They believed at that time that if income tax deductions were allowed on plans that were properly vested, then probably the labour unions themselves and employee-employer relationships would allow for a large segment of our country to be covered by this particular means.

This was not only considered by that government; it was considered by this government. In the *Canada Gazette* of July 18, 1959 this matter was again introduced by order in council and was again tried. In both cases this was unsuccessful in establishing what would be acceptable to industry, to employees and to the income tax department as a proper method of assessment.

I hope that for the sake of the old age pensioners, those on old age assistance, for social justice and the social picture in Canada, we do not reduce this matter of national pensions to an election issue and that we are serious when we say it will be referred to a committee. I hope that if an election is not anticipated immediately this matter will be referred to a committee of the house and that we will be given an opportunity to discuss the proposals this session, not in the light of an election but in the light of deliberations

in order that we may arrive at a pension plan which will be more acceptable and satisfactory to the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Herridge: One o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Kootenay West calls it one o'clock.

At one o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must inform the house that if the hon. minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Minister of National Health and Welfare): In closing the debate on second reading of this bill I do not think I have anything to add to my opening remarks which were explanatory of the cost of these proposals and the amount of money involved. The hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) asked how these payments were to be financed. I simply say that this is a matter of financing, and, of course, it will be dealt with at all times by the Minister of Finance.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Chown in the chair.

On clause 1—*Agreements with provinces.*

Mr. Herridge: I had intended to be here to make a few brief remarks on second reading but I had a number of students from Carleton University wanting to be informed on the C.C.F.-New Democratic party principles and I was delayed. I kept on telling them that I must get away, and they said: do tell us more, this is wonderful. That caused me to be a few minutes late.

I did want to say, first of all, that we support this bill and welcome the improvement which it brings into the lives of those persons who rely on old age assistance. We also welcome the increase in the permissible income. I think that is a fortunate provision because it will bring within the scope of the legislation a number of people who have in the past been denied assistance because of the terms of the regulations.

However, I want first of all to say that the term "old age assistance" is perhaps not the best which could be chosen. We could use a much better term. It reminds me somewhat of the parish relief we had when I was a boy. I wonder whether the minister might consider calling this "old age security, stage 1" and