

Expansion of Social Security

Mr. Pierre-André Boutin (Dorchester): Mr. Speaker, of the five minutes remaining for the discussion of this notice of motion, I shall take only three, so that in the last two minutes, we may bring to a vote the resolution introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

For many years, Social Credit has been advocating the principle contained in this motion. As a matter of fact, it says that consideration should be given to reducing the age of old age pensioners to 60. I feel that legislation to this end could be enacted by the present government even this year, if it introduced a measure designed to pay old age pensions as from 60 years of age.

However, in order to ensure the security of a certain class of society we should not, as a result, increase the insecurity of other classes of society in this country. This is somewhat related to the question I directed earlier to the parliamentary secretary to the minister, namely that if the old age security pension is increased, the government by the same token, and we had that evidence not very long ago, increases the insecurity of another class of society, since in the same piece of legislation a 1 per cent increase in the personal income tax was also introduced.

With the present system, I wonder where all this will lead us to if, in order to get elected, political parties advocate a further increase in social security.

Under the present system, we know, and the Liberal party has proved it, that by increasing security, insecurity becomes greater by the same token.

Would it not be more advisable for the government to consider looking elsewhere to obtain the necessary funds to pay for that security.

As the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Frenette) said earlier, if only the interest paid on the national debt were used and made available to the Canadian people to pay social security, we would then have enough funds to increase and even double family allowances throughout Canada.

We are not asking the government to double family allowances, but to distribute the amount we pay in interest on the debt of Canada on security measures for all Canadian citizens. And this somewhat follows the proposal made by the hon. member who introduced this motion, that is, the advisability of improving legislation already in effect. In order to improve our social security legislation according to the economy of the country—surely, resources are not lacking in

Canada—we have to know is how to organize our economy in order to develop those resources so that every Canadian can be given more security.

Here, I would point out that the federal government raised the old age pension by \$10 last fall, but surely, it is not the old people in the province of Quebec who benefited from that, because Mr. Lesage, with his regime of grandeur, managed to cut by \$10 a certain security given to the aged. Therefore, they are still getting the same amount of \$75 they were receiving before the \$10 increase given by the federal government.

I leave the last two minutes to the house so that we can take the vote.

[Text]

Mr. Lloyd Francis (Carleton): Mr. Speaker, in the little time which remains I should like to say a few words on the motion. Just over 20 years ago the late Lord Beveridge published a report on social insurance and allied services. At that time he put forward a minimum standard of security, and I know that the hon. member who has introduced this motion has worked carefully towards this since that time. But there has been a shift in our thinking and in our objectives in our approach to the problem. The terms of the motion provide a major income maintenance program, such as pensions for widows with dependant children, survivors benefits, retirement pensions, etc. This is a requirement of a major attack on poverty. That is the inference which I draw from the remarks of the hon. member, which were at a very high level. There was no reference to meeting the problems of constitutional adjustment or negotiation with the provinces, although there is reference to it in the resolution.

The problem of a government which is responsible for the implementation of legislation is one of priority. I have listened in this house, Mr. Speaker, to priorities which have been urged by the hon. member. On one occasion it is t.b. and mental institutions. On another occasion it is the improvement of disability programs. On another occasion it is the problem of housing. All of these are highly desirable, Mr. Speaker. But the government of the day have certain basic objectives in mind. The first and foremost objective is a high level of employment, productivity and income. The second objective is a national measure of the distribution of the results of the productivity of the economy. This calls to mind the unfortunate fact that to do this