

Senior Citizens

see our great country, and that when they travel in Canada they should enjoy a 50 per cent reduction in fares.

Another basic need of senior citizens is accommodation, but there surely can be no substitute for senior citizens remaining in their own homes as long as they wish and are physically able to do so. Competent but poor old folk often end up in nursing homes because they cannot pay for low-care or no-care housing. In 1976 in Ontario, according to provincial health minister Frank Miller, there were 35,000 persons in homes for the aged who should not have been there.

In earlier times they might well have been with younger members of their family, looking after grandchildren with a room of their own in the bigger homes of those days. But today the families are smaller, houses have shrunk and costs have climbed. The system tends to discard older persons.

Even elderly people living in their own houses are forced to sell because they cannot keep up the property taxes. They get a good price in inflated dollars for the family house but, in Ottawa, many have to pay more than \$600 monthly for board and a shared room in an old folks' home subsidized by the province. It is a "no-win" situation especially for a childless person who has paid school taxes for decades and now is forced out by taxes.

It may be hard for older persons to keep a house; even harder to buy one if they need financing. Banks and trust companies generally do not issue mortgages on properties if the sum of the applicant's age and the term of the loan exceeds 80.

City planners and developers appear to favour destroying whatever has lost the glitter of newness. They raze the old to make way for sterile, costly apartments renting at prices beyond the reach of the elderly. Governments too seem mesmerized by the passion to plant huge office buildings in city cores, whether or not there is a valid demand for offices. Kicking out the poor and old on the pretext of upgrading an area is more fashionable than renewing accommodation so that the elderly may stay in districts they know and love among friends of a lifetime.

I suggest strongly one need that can be identified is the need to meet expenses and be financially able to continue living in one's own home on a slender retirement allowance. Personally I think this type of living should be encouraged and, if necessary, financial assistance should be given to senior citizens to enable them to do this. One goal of our nation should be to see that our senior citizens receive at least the average of the minimum wages established across the country.

For disabled senior citizens who require nursing home care, existing facilities are not sufficient to meet the demand. The financial technique presently used to build these facilities is to borrow money from CMHC, obtain federal grants where they are available and construct the facility. About 80 per cent of the cost of operating these facilities in New Brunswick is paid for by the provincial government through social assistance programs. In making these operating payments the provincial

[Mr. Howie.]

government in effect repays the CMHC mortgage to a great extent.

The federal government has not come to grips with this problem to the financial degree it should, and I would think the great need for facilities like this would attract the early attention of the commission that I propose be set up by this bill. I can indicate that in my own riding, areas such as Stanley, Millville, Nackawic, Oromocto and Fredericton come quickly to mind. There are many others as well. I would like to see greater use made along these lines of the Victoria Health Centre in Fredericton. Wherever possible senior citizens should be located in or near their own communities.

One project that appeared in the Canada Works program in my constituency and which I should like to share with the House is one involving a one-on-one service by volunteers for senior citizens. The volunteer under this program would be available to assist a senior citizen, who perhaps is unable to get out of his or her home, with such things as grocery shopping or shovelling out a front walk on a bad winter day. This type of service I find extremely useful and is appreciated by senior citizens.

Mr. A. Allentuck in "The Cost of Age", Toronto, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1977, prescribes single-issue politics as a powerful weapon in the hands of the elderly of the future. "More for the elderly now" might be their motif. Their platform contains the following elements:

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1. No compulsory retirement.
2. Private pensions openly managed and properly insured against mismanagement and fraud.
3. Public pensions, principally the Guaranteed Income Supplement, increased to levels adequate to support lives that are comfortable and secure.
4. Relief from real estate taxes.
5. Construction of more and better nursing homes.
6. Reduction of the cost of eyeglasses, hearing aids and other prosthetic devices either by subsidy or government intervention into the respective industries.

In the same book Mr. Allentuck suggests the following:

1. Patients shall be treated, dressed, clothed, housed and cared for in a manner befitting their stature as adults.
2. Patients may refuse medical treatments and medication to the extent permitted by law.
3. Patients shall not be compelled to participate in any experiments of any nature.
4. Patients shall be given explanations of their conditions, care and treatment, and such explanations shall be phrased in terms comprehensible to them.
5. Patients shall not be restricted to their beds or to their institutions unless their medical conditions so warrant.
6. If patients or their families make supplemental contributions to their institutions as entrance contract payments, such payments shall be refunded if they withdraw in protest against service rendered.
7. The patient's religious and cultural preferences shall be respected.

Mr. Reuben Baetz, when executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development, had the following to say about the elderly:

Retired persons must themselves be engaged in the planning and implementation of programs, services, recreation, education, from which they are to derive