

Supply—Health and Welfare

terms of some of the legislation we have had under discussion, would not be very expensive.

Mr. Castleden: I should like to ask the minister a question with regard to the disability pensions. In recent weeks I ran across a case in my constituency of a lady who was confined to a wheel chair, badly crippled and unable to do even her housework. She had a son about 14 going to school; her husband was working. She was denied the disability pension. Her neighbour, receiving the disability pension, is able to do her housework, does her garden work and comes and visits her quite frequently. My question is, to whom should I appeal for a review of the case? This is a 50-50 proposition between the provincial and federal governments.

Mr. Martin: If my hon. friend will let me have the case I shall see that it is reviewed at once.

Mr. Castleden: I shall be glad to let him have it. I did not investigate it fully, but is there any board to which such people can appeal for a review of the case? Is it provincial or federal?

Mr. Martin: The case is examined by a panel of doctors, one representing the provincial and one representing the federal government. Where there is a difference of opinion, a third doctor not in the government service is asked for his opinion. If my hon. friend will let me have the case I shall see that it is expedited and dealt with as quickly as possible.

Mr. Castleden: I thank the minister for that assurance. Should that appeal be made to the provincial authorities?

Mr. Martin: Yes, to the provincial authorities.

Mr. Castleden: But ordinarily that is where a person should go in order to draw the attention of the officers to what is going on?

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Chairman, it grieves me to spoil the minister's plans for tonight by rising at this late hour, but I have endeavoured to give all other hon. members an opportunity to express their views and offer their suggestions before I undertook to deal with the very important question of old age pensions. We had a good deal of talk about the difficulties with which the old age pensioners are confronted, and then the hon. member for Fort William rose and with a sort of sweep of his hand just wiped out

all possibilities of doing anything for these unhappy people by asking what particular tax we would levy in order to raise the money to give old age pensioners the kind of provision to which they surely are entitled.

I should like to refer to the document to which the hon. member for Mackenzie referred last night in what I considered to be a good speech facing facts and plenty of them. I should like to recall to the house that the hon. member referred to the findings of the welfare council of greater Winnipeg. That is not an organization that can be laughed off too easily. The welfare council of greater Winnipeg is a responsible organization of intelligent Canadians facing facts. This is what the hon. member for Mackenzie told us, based upon what we find on page 16 of a work prepared by this same welfare council of greater Winnipeg called "Age and Opportunity." He gave us the following requirements, according to that organization, for an old age pensioner: rent, \$20 a month; food, \$30 a month; clothing, \$10 a month; church, \$2 a month; medical, \$3 a month; memberships, hobbies, \$5 a month; transportation, \$4.50 a month; incidentals, \$5 a month; laundry, \$2 a month, making a total of \$83.50, where that person is today getting the magnificent sum of \$40 a month.

There is a set of conditions there, Mr. Chairman, which I do not think this house can afford to neglect on this occasion. The minister has told us that what would be required would be a tremendous additional amount of money, and we will agree. But the thing we persist in overlooking in nearly every case is that the goods necessary to provide these needs are right here in Canada. The means of producing them are all right here in Canada, but these goods are not being produced because they are not being bought or they are going without being sold because people have not the money to buy them. That is going on from coast to coast in this nation. We do not seem to be impressed by that fact.

The last time I spoke in this house I pointed out the fact that if the Indians ranging our plains 150 years ago had plenty of buffalo, fish, firewood, fruit on the hills and a few other things, then all Indians were able to get all they needed of those things. It took the white man to come along and find out that the more of these things you produced the poorer you were; the more buffalo you had, the more fish you had, the more wood you had, the more fruit you had, the less you were able to enjoy.

I know that to a great many members this sounds very unrealistic, but why that should be the case is beyond my comprehension.