

position of playing off one age group against another. I find that offensive, to say the least. We have reached the point where this administration, if it wants to make a mark on Canadian history politically, must move to reform basic pension plans.

This legislation will not do it. Tinkering will not be enough. There is nothing as devastating as to have worked all your life and to reach the point where you are finally looking ahead seven, eight or nine years to retirement, only to discover that not only do you not have a job, not only do you not have an income of some reasonable proportion, but during the period of time you had anticipated you would be working you are not contributing to a pension plan. This reduces pensionable income and therefore reduces the income received when you reach what is generally accepted as the pension age. You are caught in a catch-22 situation. On the one hand, you have no income while you are supposed to be working because you cannot find work and you are losing the assets you accumulated through your labour. On the other hand, because you do not have that income you are detrimentally affecting, if not eliminating, the potential pension income you would have had, had you been able to work to the normal retirement age.

It is unacceptable that we as a Parliament are not dealing with that issue right now. I know the Minister feels as strongly as I do about it. This has to become one of the highest priorities of Parliament. We cannot afford to gloss it over, neither can we afford to be overly lavish in our praise of the small change. We are thankful for the small change. Those who will receive it will be grateful for it and it is right that they should get it, but it is insignificant when viewed over and against the need.

I want simply to say to the Minister that whatever else the Government believes it has on its agenda, we have to deal with this matter. We must deal with it. We cannot put it off. There is no way back for those individuals. With every passing month, with every passing year, the dilemma confronting them becomes even more enormous and the hardship more unacceptable. We cannot apologize to them eight years from now and say, "We really wish we could have done something for you; unfortunately it was just not possible". That will be too late for them. Therefore, it is necessary that we agree together in the House that we will find the time to deal as expeditiously as possible with the dilemma confronting those particular people about whom I speak today.

If the Minister will commit himself to bringing forward legislation in this regard during this session of this Parliament, I will commit this Party to making sure that we put forth every single effort we can to guarantee the success of the legislation. I ask him to recognize that delay compounds the hardship. We simply cannot have delay on this matter.

Old Age Security Act

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 45, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy)—Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements (a) Consultation with provinces (b) Reviews of equalization payment made to Manitoba; the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie)—Nuclear Energy (a) Request for parliamentary inquiry into industry (b) Industry's accountability; the Hon. Member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy)—Employment (a) Student summer jobs (b) Allocation of funds. (c) Government consultation.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Epp (Provencher) that Bill C-26, an Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. George Minaker (Winnipeg-St. James): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for recognizing me. I started a diet this morning and I thought for a minute that I was having excellent success and would not be recognized.

This is the first time I have risen in the House to speak formally in a debate. I would ask for your patience for a few moments so that I might acknowledge and congratulate you on your appointment as Acting Speaker. I know you will do a great job, as you have done to this point. Also I should like to congratulate the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp). This is the first opportunity I have had to do so. I know he will do an excellent job. I had the opportunity of working with him when I was a Minister in the provincial Government. I know how dedicated he is to his position of responsibility and his desire to do well for the Canadian public.

I also take this opportunity to thank my constituents for showing me that they had faith in my ability to be their Member. I will try to live up to their expectations. Particularly I thank all those people who worked for me during my campaign.

Winnipeg-St. James is a relatively new riding. It was assembled in 1979 with the redistribution and was represented by a friend of mine, Mr. Robert Lane, a Progressive Conservative.