

Old Age Security

occasionally, seem reluctant to vote or to force the government to act in this way. Just two months ago I had the opportunity to move an amendment in this direction but unfortunately in spite of the encouraging words from members of the opposition spoken outside this House I found that they voted unanimously against my amendment.

Then I hope Mr. Speaker that they will be more honest and that if they are in favour of granting the old age security at 60 they will not hesitate to so inform the Parliament. It is certainly not enough to speak about it, we must act. If men are judged from what they do rather than from what they say I hope that what they say outside this House will be implemented within.

I hope that the Minister will take kindly to my appeal before the opposition forces him to act in that way. Society as a whole will take into account, I think, a piece of legislation which could prove so beneficial and we shall really bring in the relief which people so badly need.

I hope that these few comments will make the minister more aware of such a measure and I would be very happy for all those who could profit by it.

● (1540)

[*English*]

Mr. Lalonde: Question.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised at the minister shouting "question". Yesterday he took a half hour or more to explain this legislation, which needed no explaining because it is simplicity itself. It does not do anything. When it was asked for last March, the minister could not introduce it. Now, however, it is possible.

I compliment the minister. He has not lost any of his skill for touching up things. When he was on this side, he did a good job of touching up things for the people with whom he was associated. He has not lost his skill. He now has a bigger job to do, and a tough one.

Something should be added to this bill. It does not say anything and does not do anything. You pay your income tax quarterly. What a big deal for the old age pensioner to get his cost of living increase quarterly. Is this again to mislead the old age pensioners into thinking we are doing something for them? We should be increasing the basic old age pension so they can get ahead a little instead of behind.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Hear, hear!

Mr. Rynard: I want to make some suggestions; I hope the minister will take kindly to them. When answering a question today about care for the aging, the disabled and so forth, the minister used the same skill. He should be named "old man tomorrow", the way he gets around questions in the House of Commons and does nothing. That is a good title. Someone once named Sir John A. Macdonald "old man tomorrow", but he did something. Maybe that is how the name came about originally. Because he weighed everything in the balance, and acted.

The minister has a nice smile. I like him. However, I want to say to the minister that the light is always in the

[Mr. La Salle.]

window calling sinners to repentance. The minister always has the opportunity to repent.

I say in all seriousness that the eligibility age for old age pension should be lowered to 60 for all those medically unfit to carry on their jobs full time. Putting it another way, this means all those 65 or more in calendar years. We always use calendar years to determine when people should be laid off, not physical years. It should be physical years, not calendar years.

Plant doctors and others should indicate those who should be considered. This could be confirmed by an application form for the pension on physical grounds, either from their own doctor or a specialist, if necessary.

I remember when the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt) raised this matter with regard to the Canada Pension Plan. Unless one's disability is very severe, it is almost impossible to get a pension. No one knows this better than the minister. A person might be completely disabled as far as remunerative work is concerned and still not qualify for a disability pension. If a person is in a wheelchair, he can qualify. Some illnesses are not that obvious.

Whenever there is evidence that a man is physically or mentally unable to join the work force, he should automatically receive a pension, whether it is the old age pension or a disability pension. The old age pension would be the simpler to institute. Even though a man is unable to work, it is sometimes difficult to prove that he is totally disabled. The minister has completely forgotten this man, or has he? I sometimes wonder whether he glosses over legislation just to meet the requirements of the side on which he sits.

The minister has forgotten that a great number of people live in the grey area, just on the brink or slightly above qualifying for the supplement. They are entirely forgotten. They are the victims of a hard earned dollar turned into a soft dollar by an inflationary spending government.

The minister was critical of what the Tories have done. He put on record that he was once a Tory. He forgets that he joined the Liberals about the time the inflationary spiral began. It was this inflationary spiral that necessitated increasing the pensions. The other day the minister even claimed credit for those increases.

I notice the minister is taking in all this. He carefully avoided mentioning the "six buck boys" because he was riding on the other side of the fence at that time. He forgot about the great philanthropists of the Liberal party in the 1950's.

There were other sins of omission and commission. In 1936, Prime Minister King issued perpetual bonds at 3 per cent after lowering the bank interest so that even 3 per cent would make them mighty attractive. It was understood they would be redeemed before the coupons ran out, or at least when they ran out. This Liberal government said "No dice, we won't pay you" and issued more. Some of those people are the same people who bought bonds and today are being denied justice.

In answer to a question today, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) said the government does not yet have an answer to this question. He should also be called "old man