

and these women are trying to make ends meet on \$389.00 per month.

A single 65-year-old person in Ontario with no other source of income receives three monthly benefits: old age security of \$186.80, a guaranteed income supplement of \$153.35, and GAINS under the Ontario guaranteed income supplement of \$49.00. These figures add up to the grand total of \$389.15 per month. If one compares this figure to the poverty line cut-off for a single person living in a city the size of Toronto, that person needs a minimum of \$470.00 a month.

I want to refer to something that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) said in her remarks the other day, which I found to be quite astounding. At page 1281 of *Hansard* for May 21, 1980, the minister was reported as saying:

The officials of my department estimate that there are approximately 700,000 single, widowed and divorced GIS recipients of the supplement to the pension who are living in poverty. Fully 60 per cent of them are women.

In another part of her remarks, the minister said this:

On an annual basis, the amount guaranteed by our old age security programs, that is the basic pension plus the old age supplement combined, represents roughly 80 per cent of the amount Statistics Canada defines as the poverty line. There is no doubt that an income which is slightly lower than 80 per cent of the poverty line is not acceptable in a country as rich as ours and is certainly not enough to live on decently.

Yet the same minister, and I have heard members of the Liberal party speaking here tonight express many of the same sentiments, can stand up and support a \$35.00 increase in the supplement and still stand there with a straight face. It is laughable to the people of Canada, and it is certainly laughable to the people on this side of the House.

I want to tell members of the government where the money would go if they were one of the 32,000 single women over the age of 65, living in metro Toronto today. For argument's sake, let us take a month in the life of a Toronto pensioner who is a widow.

First of all, you would need a roof over your head. It is quite likely you would still be living in your own home. The old neighbourhood means a lot to you and many of your friends still live there. Even though your mortgage has been paid off, you find that it still costs you about \$250.00 a month for shelter. This money goes toward property and education taxes, housing insurance, repairs and maintenance, heat, water, hydro and telephone. In talking to some of your other widowed friends, you find that they are not much better off living in a one-bedroom apartment. Unsubsidized one-bedroom apartments cost about \$280.00 in metro Toronto, but the vacancy rate is less than 1 per cent, so those apartments are very hard to find.

The subsidized housing is cheaper, but you have been told there are about 3,300 people on the waiting list. And those who live in rooming houses can expect to find their fridge is down the hall, can expect to share a bathroom with four other people and wash the dishes in the bathroom sink. The stove in your room will probably offer two options: on or off. So,

whether you rent or own your own home, your housing costs are likely to absorb a good 60 per cent of your pension income.

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In addition, you find that there is a cumulative shortfall. As things wear out, they are difficult to replace and they can rarely be replaced with new items. Clothes and sheets, dishes and glasses have to come from bazaars and rummage sales and second-hand stores.

Food for even a moderate eater will run close to \$80 a month. This includes an occasional meal at a restaurant; it is good for your mental health, encourages you to be sociable, and you need the occasional change of scenery. Every time you go to the grocery store you are reminded of how packaging is done with families in mind. Economies of scale are great for large families who can afford and use up five and ten-pound bags of flour, sugar and cereal. But single people pay dearly for things in small packages. Anyhow, how could you possibly carry anything so heavy over a distance of several blocks?

This raises another problem. Once the food has been paid for, how do you get it home? Bundle buggies are great in the summer, but are useless in the winter. If you shop in corner convenience stores, you pay about 10 per cent more for every item of food you buy. So you shop in chain stores, taking the bus there and back, especially in the winter when sidewalks are icy.

Your special senior citizens bus tickets, plus an occasional cab to take you places off regular bus routes, cost an average of \$26 a month. This figure does not, of course, include transportation costs for occasional bus or train trips to visit out of town grandchildren or other relatives who live far away. If you are one of those privileged seniors who own their own cars, you would pay about twice the \$26 transportation cost for pedestrian seniors. That \$50 a month would cover gas on 4,000 kilometres per year, servicing and repairs, maintenance and insurance. Not included in this estimate are parking costs. Most senior citizens do not own cars, so for the purposes of this scenario we will use the \$26 figure.

So far we have spent \$250 on housing, \$80 on food, and \$26 on transportation. That comes to \$356 for basic requirements of subsistence. I hear my Conservative friend on the far right making interjections. I am not surprised. I would not expect him to understand the problems of senior citizens.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** He did not say a word.

**Mr. Young:** He has been yelling all night.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** He has not.

**Mr. Young:** Out of our \$389 pension income, there is only \$33 left for the rest of the month to spend on such luxuries as clothes, dental care, glasses, hearing aids, gifts, a movie, entertaining friends, long distance phone calls, cable TV, or an occasional bingo game.

To solve this problem, the Liberals, those big spenders, are throwing an extra \$35 a month into the pot. Who are they