

the country make it clear that the people are amazed and disappointed at the excuses found for delaying action in connection with this matter. I would urge that the government get its ear to the ground, so that it may realize what people are thinking about this matter, and that it ought not to delay any further the necessary increase in the amount of old age pensions.

There are other matters which could be discussed, including the eligible age, the means test and various other provisions. I would remind the government that, in discussing these matters, we are not now comparing their performance with standards which some of the rest of us might set; rather we are comparing their performance with their own standards as set out in the proposals they have made to the dominion-provincial conference. They have set the standard—the minimum standard at any rate. Some of us are not satisfied that that goes far enough. But at least they should not be allowed to rest until they have measured up to their own intimation that the old age pension ought to be at least \$30 a month, without any further delay.

Mr. MacINNIS: Before the session closes, I wish to say only one brief word on behalf of old age pensioners. During the last two sessions of parliament we have made provisions, first of all, in the matter of our own indemnity, in salary boosts for various civil servants, if not for all of them. Only recently the cost of living bonus was increased for those who had been receiving increases in wages. Throughout the country organized labour and other workers are receiving increases in wages, all of which results in the meagre pension paid to old age pensioners being worth less than it was before.

It is the duty of the government not only to look after those who can look after themselves, but also to see that those members of the national family who are not able to look after themselves are provided for in as large a measure as the country can afford. I submit that this country can afford a much better pension than is now provided. I suggest to the minister and the government, if no other way can be found, that they add a cost of living bonus to the old age pension in order to remove some of the poverty from those who must subsist on the income provided by these pensions.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Once more I wish to point out to the government that the amount this country can afford to pay its aged people, the senior citizens, does not depend upon the amount of money that can be wrung out of the people; it should depend upon the goods and

services which this country can produce. There are four or five ministers in their seats at present and may I point out to them—

Mr. MITCHELL: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said there were practically no ministers in their seats, so that I am glad to hear the hon. member for Lethbridge say what he has.

Mr. KNOWLES: That is not what I said; I referred to the large number of ministers who were out of the country.

Mr. MITCHELL: On very important government business.

Mr. KNOWLES: This is important business also.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Since the minister has raised the question I think the matter should be recorded in *Hansard*. The ministers who are away from this country are on very important business. Every person in this committee who faces facts realistically knows that, and I want the government to have credit for that fact. We hear silly talk once in a while, but let it be borne in mind that never in the history of this nation has it been so important that Canada be represented in so many different places by strong men. Of course those men have to be away to take care of the interests of this country, and that explains the absence of so many ministers.

I was referring to the number of ministers in their seats at present. I urge on them that, if they are to save this country from calamity, they must begin to realize that the amount this country can pay to its old age pensioners, to its labourers in industry, depends upon the goods and services this country can produce and not upon the money that can be wrung out of the people by taxation. When we approach the economy of Canada in a realistic manner we shall see that the old age pensioners, the senior citizens of this country, are in receipt of a sufficient income to support them in dignity and comfort for the remaining days of their lives. The longer this country neglects these senior citizens, the longer it will continue to cast reflection upon those in power in the country and upon the country itself.

I have stated on several occasions that a pension of not less than \$50 a month at sixty years of age should be paid. That is an exceedingly moderate amount for the elder citizens of Canada. Once more I wish to put myself on record and, through me, the Social Credit group, as favouring the payment of at least \$50 a month to all senior citizens of Canada sixty years of age and over.