

Old Age Security

I cannot be so glib when it comes to agreeing with the words uttered by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre who said that because the practical effect of this resolution will be an increase in pensions to senior citizens, all is well. I may say, with respect, that all is not well. I cast my mind back to the evening of July 18 when we had a procedural argument that lasted for almost an hour and a half concerning an amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition to the effect that this pension increase should be paid forthwith, and that our senior citizens should not have to wait until the contributory pension plan was adopted before they got their increase. The Liberals were organized on that occasion by the Secretary of State to set forth those procedural arguments, so that in effect the motion before the house on July 18 never came before the house. The point I want to make is that if that motion had died there, then the effectiveness of the opposition would have died with it. It might have been considered a new form of closure, because on that occasion the decision was reserved and to this date we have never had a decision on the motion.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I am rising on a point of order. The hon. gentleman, who is a distinguished member of the bar, and who has therefore no real excuse for not knowing the rules of the house, surely realizes that on the debate on this matter he cannot open a subject that is up for debate on the order paper on another matter, and that what he is doing now is quite against the rules.

Mr. Woolliams: I do not want to get into an argument with my good friend across the way because I see he has been suffering from political phthisis for a long time, but I do wish to say that I cannot sit by and give silent approval to such political conniving.

The effect of what happened on July 18 was to silence the opposition, and if this is to be a precedent in the House of Commons, and it would seem to be an unprecedented one, then the very function, the very effectiveness and the very purpose of the official opposition would be destroyed.

I want to repeat my point, that there are those who still put an ounce of freedom above a pound of security, and I am sure there are those in Canada who are to be the recipients of this \$10 increase, and who, knowing whatever party were in opposition was to be silenced, would give up that pound of security for a good ounce of freedom.

It has been the opposition's functioning properly and effectively that has brought about the desired result. Destroy that effectiveness and the purpose of the opposition will be stopped. There is no better authority

for that than the minister herself who, in the *Globe and Mail*, is reported as saying:

In the first place, there is no assurance the Quebec premiums will be small. Mr. Lesage wants a big fund for investment and he can't get it fast enough with a 2 per cent levy.

Besides, I am not sure that a very large investment fund in the hands of a government is a good thing. It is taking too much money out of private hands. Tremendous power could be wielded by a government with so much money. By controlling investment capital it could control business.

We could end up with a sort of national socialism, like they had in nazi Germany, and not much free enterprise.

Why was the decision not made? What was her position on July 18 last? I want to refer once more to the position which the 96 Conservatives took in the House of Commons on that occasion, and contrast it with what her position was. This is what she said, quoting from page 2342—

Mr. Pickersgill: On a point of order, the hon. gentleman is now breaking an express rule of the house by quoting from another debate in the same session, which is absolutely contrary to the rules and makes orderly debate impossible.

Mr. Woolliams: The only reason I was going to quote it was because I was afraid the minister would say I misquoted her. However I can set out very carefully her position on that occasion. She took the position that until the Liberal government had implemented its contributory pension plan, and until the contributions had started to roll in, not one dollar would go out in old age pensions to our senior citizens.

Then we have the position taken by another Liberal member on that occasion, as recorded at page 2363 of *Hansard*.

Miss LaMarsh: Who is that?

Mr. Woolliams: The hon. member for Kootenay East (Mr. Byrne) sitting right behind the minister took the same position. He also said that what would happen would be that it would cost the Canadian people \$100 million, and that was the reason the government was not going to increase the old age pension. That was the position which the Liberals took on July 18 last; but that was not the position which they took during the election. They committed themselves to the Canadian people to increase old age pensions by \$10 a month and it was only after the minister herself was embarrassed, and the cabinet and the entire government was embarrassed—

Miss LaMarsh: Perhaps the hon. member would permit a question. May I ask him if he will produce one solitary document in which the Liberal party committed itself to