

*Old Age Security Act Amendment*

in putting it in the bill we are taking into account the recommendation of the Senate committee on aging.

The senior member for Halifax talked about the need for checking fraud in cases where it might take place. He suggested that neighbours could be asked to inform on pensioners. Well, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. McCleave:** On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I never suggested that neighbours might be asked to check on fraud. I said that under the legislation presented by the minister neighbours would be encouraged to inform in respect of fraud. There is a definite difference between those two points.

**Mr. MacEachen:** The words of the hon. member, as reported at page 11,270 of *Hansard*, are as follows:

If somebody is going to set out to defraud the taxpayers a check could be made in other ways. Perhaps neighbours would tell on him—

**Mr. McCleave:** May I ask the minister a question?

**Mr. MacEachen:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, order.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Those are the words of the hon. member for Halifax. Mr. Speaker, that really would be snooping; it would establish an underground army of super-duper snoopers. I cannot understand what the great fuss is all about. People are asked to fill out income tax forms accurately and to the best of their ability, and most of them do. Pensioners will be asked to fill out declaration forms to the best of their knowledge and most of them will. Undoubtedly mistakes will appear when declarations are cross-checked and I venture to say that on occasion the correction of these mistakes will work to the benefit of the applicant.

There are no penalties for those who make mistakes. Pensioners who fill out their forms accurately and to the best of their knowledge have nothing to fear. Mr. Speaker, I do not have very much more to say, except that I should like to remind—

**Mr. Starr:** You have said too much already. You have ruined everything.

**Mr. MacEachen:** I should like to remind the house of the words spoken by the hon. member for York South, who unfortunately and regrettably is not present to hear my comments. He had some rather pungent comments to make in an earlier debate about

public disillusionment with parliament. He traced this cynicism and disillusionment to the callous way in which promises made at election time are disregarded, ignored and betrayed. Maybe that is a source of cynicism, but if there is cynicism there are other reasons for it. The hon. member for York South himself suggests there are other reasons. One of them is the wide discrepancy between how members in the opposition talk and how they vote in this House of Commons.

I cannot match the hon. member for York South in making sermonettes in this house or in delivering judgments on mere mortals from his Olympian heights, but I venture to suggest that members do nothing to foster faith in the institution of parliament when they take a totally destructive line in respect of legislation and then turn around and vote for that very same legislation.

I have already put on the record what the hon. member for York South and his colleagues had to say last June about the guaranteed income approach. Now, simply because the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre refuses to be switched on to mid-twentieth century thinking, they have performed a graceless, mass philosophical flip-flop. The summertime romance has ended in a December divorce court simply because the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre cannot forget that committee of 1951.

**Mr. Knowles:** That is right. Its principle still stands.

• (9:30 p.m.)

**Mr. MacEachen:** He cannot forget it, and he convinced his leader, his deputy leader and the member for Vancouver-Kingsway that what they said in June was incorrect, and they performed a graceless and mass flip-flop in the period from June to December.

I suggest that members of this house who have termed the provisions of this legislation "iniquitous", as did the hon. member for Regina City (Mr. More), "a guaranteed pittance", as did the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas), "petty in mind and petty in heart", as did the hon. member for York South, "guaranteed annual poverty", as did the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, "a sham, a hollow mockery", as did the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas), "inherently wrong", as did the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, "wrong and unjust", as did the hon. member for Grey-Bruce, and "a retrograde step", as did the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre,