

*Old Age Security Act*

er. A great many people between 60 and 65 years of age are ill, unable to earn their living and compelled to retire.

Evidently, some voluntarily retire for one reason or another, because their work was too strenuous or exacting. Every day we meet persons between 60 and 65 who have stopped working because they are unable to do a full day's work.

Those aged between 60 and 65 might benefit from a universal income plan, which would mean that one would not have to go down on one's knees for a small supplement. At present, rather than giving a reasonable pension, the government grants a supplement that tends to encourage laziness; if a person earns the slightest income, he loses as much in deductions. If a person receives income other than from his work, he loses the supplement. I think, Mr. Speaker, that the government is going to have to realize that there are people in difficulty in our society, there are people who have no help but themselves. Government members are going to have to pay a visit to their constituencies from time to time, to see what is happening there, to see that poverty exists and that there are poor people, that solutions must be found, that high finance and industry are not the only ones that need money, and, lastly, to see that there are human beings in Canada.

The government is soon going to have to grant a minimum survival income, the more so in view of the fast-rising cost of living, not a minimum income such as it now proposes, for that is just pulling the wool. It is misrepresenting its aims.

The guaranteed minimum income is a Social Credit term that the present government has borrowed and twisted into its own interpretation.

When the Social Credit Party speaks about the minimum guaranteed income, this is not what it is talking about, because this does not mean the same thing at all.

The government will have to come to the conclusion that the spouse will have to be considered as retired. The government imagines, it would seem, that when a person reaches age 65, his or her spouse did not age, that he or she has no right to live and that a person who receives \$100 or more than his or her spouse will have the other one in continuous dependence. The government will have to lower the pension age—it has no choice—to reach a real system of minimum guaranteed income.

Maybe we will not win today, maybe the government members do not see clearly enough, but better late than never; better wait a year, if need be. But there is one thing I want to say to the elderly: we will never quit, we will never become discouraged and we will stop only when we have won.

• (1540)

[*English*]

**Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, I must say at the outset that I do not propose to support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) despite the long and enduring friendship which has existed between us. I take this position mainly because I do not see how reference of the bill back to committee at this point would bring any advantage to the old age pensioners or achieve anything of benefit to them.

[Mr. Boisvert.]

I have noted the pleas of one or two of the previous speakers for a larger old age pension. I can endorse their suggestion without question. Indeed, the objective of out party was a pension much higher than is proposed in this measure. But I do not know how it would be possible to obtain a larger amount by referring the matter back to committee. Motions would be required calling for the government to spend more money, and this does not usually happen in committee. Unless those who support this amendment can convince me that they can get more money by the reference they ask for, I will not support the motion. They have advanced no such arguments to this point.

I go back and forth to my constituency with some regularity—about every two weeks since the House came into session—and I know there are many senior citizens who want this bill to pass and who want the extra benefits it will bring them. That is the situation. During the election, all candidates met with the senior citizens' organization in the city of Saskatoon. I do not know whether similar organizations exist in other towns and cities in constituencies whose members have already spoken on this amendment, but in Saskatoon there is an organization of considerable importance. The president is Mr. J. L. Phelps, a very capable man. Officers of that organization met with all the candidates and put forward, point by point, the desires and needs of their members. Those of us who attended came away with a good working knowledge of their objectives and needs.

Among those aims was a pension payable at age 60. I believe this should be a major objective of parliament, and I regret that so far we have been unable to attain it. There are some in my constituency, and indeed in Canada generally, who say it should be possible to provide a voluntary pension at age 55. Saskatoon and Biggar are both what we call CNR towns. The men who work on these railroads want the option of a pension at 55. We should be working toward this end.

Under the Local Initiatives Program, and so on, we are spending a great deal of money keeping our young people out of the labour force, or at least trying to provide for them since they cannot become full-time members of the labour force. I believe we should be placing the emphasis at the other end of the scale, so that those who have made a lifetime contribution to the wealth and well-being of this country can enjoy well earned retirement on the basis of the provision of adequate financial resources.

There are other areas of our pension program which urgently require consideration. Take the case of a breadwinner who is pensionable, but whose wife who is a few years younger than him cannot draw a pension since she has never been a member of the work force. In cases like this, real hardship is encountered. Then, again, an amendment is needed to make it possible for housewives to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan if they wish to do so, making it possible for them to receive the pension in their own right. As it is, only those who work and earn can contribute.

A further consideration is the position of farmers and self-employed businessmen who find that in a particular year their income falls below the \$5,000 necessary before they can contribute to the plan to the maximum extent. As