

*Supply—Health and Welfare*

or her education beyond the age prescribed by the act for the payment of the family allowance.

These are the points I wanted to make with respect to family allowances, and also the question of the residence clause in the case of old age security payments. We will have something to say later about other angles of the problem.

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Chairman, one of the disadvantages of sitting in this corner—

**An hon. Member:** There are a lot of them.

**Mr. Patterson:** —is that it seems as though we are more or less beyond the range of vision. I am placed in the position now that, since the first time I rose this afternoon, other hon. members have stolen my thunder.

**An hon. Member:** Sit down.

**Mr. Patterson:** Nevertheless I am going to take two or three moments to refer to several matters in connection with the estimates. I was under the impression that the Minister of National Health and Welfare was very anxious to get these estimates through as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Knowles:** That was yesterday.

**Mr. Patterson:** However, I thought when he spoke in the debate this afternoon he invited an extension of the discussion, because certainly some of the remarks he made were not calculated to soothe the feelings of some of us over here and get us into a very happy frame of mind.

One of the statements he made was that he had no apologies whatsoever to make relative to the provisions that are at present made for the senior citizens of Canada. I do not think we are asking for any apologies, because I believe all of us are perfectly prepared to acknowledge the worth and value of the provisions as far as they go, and we do not want to minimize that fact in the least. He referred as well to the fact that we in Canada—I believe that was the content of the statement—are treating our senior citizens better than any other nation in the world.

I do not think that is the proper way to assess the situation. I do not think we should gauge it by what others are doing. I think the question should be, is it the best that we can do in Canada? With the wealth we have, with our productive capacity, with all the good things we enjoy, is this the best we can do for the senior citizens of our country?

I think if we were to look at it from that viewpoint we would be forced to say that we ought to be able to do better than that, whether or not any other nation is prepared

to do so. As I have said, we are not asking for apologies but for recognition of the continuing responsibility of the government with reference to the treatment accorded our senior citizens. We are reminded, of course, that the value of our dollar today is far less than it was a few years ago; therefore I think we would be justified in suggesting to the minister, the department and the government that old age pensions be raised at least to the level of the value of money when they were first instituted.

The other thought I have in connection with the old age security payments has been mentioned by one or two other speakers this evening. I refer to the eligibility of recipients of security payments to receive the money even though they may reside outside of Canada. I placed on the record some time ago a letter received from a senior citizen who had lived in Canada for 40 years or more. He had made his contribution to this country. He had lived here and spent his money here. Now in the declining years of his life, and with not very many more left because he was quite an elderly gentleman, he wanted to return to England to spend his last few years with relatives over there. But because of the regulations as they now exist he could not enjoy the fellowship of his family in the closing years of his life. I suggest that this matter be again given consideration, or perhaps it is under consideration. If it is, I hope the decision will be favourable.

While I am on my feet I will just refer very briefly to the question of our blind friends. Like some of the other members of the house, perhaps most of them, I have received a great number of communications asking for support for the request that some provision be made for our blind friends with regard to guiding allowances. We are all aware, of course, of the additional expense incurred by the blind in this regard, and I think all that should be required is to bring it to the attention of the minister and ask that favourable consideration be given the request. It would be of great assistance to them and it would be an indication of the fact that we are concerned about these people and want to do the very best we can on their behalf.

As the minister said, every member in the house is concerned and interested in the well-being of all these people who are presently the recipients of allowances of various kinds. I believe that, in spite of what the minister said this afternoon, he would still like to do a little bit more for them. So we will just commend these matters to his attention and request that they be given serious, favourable consideration.