

other people poor. You remind me of the review, on the subject of family allowances. Take the money from poor people and give it to other people. It is like your \$1 billion . . . The Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Bissonnette) boasted that he had a \$1 billion for job creation. He cut \$4 million from projects which created jobs and he makes \$1 billion from that and says: What do you think of my \$1 billion? Well, it does not make sense.

Mr. Tardif (Richmond-Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) for his eloquent speech in favour of a class of citizens who are extremely poor. I understand he made a vast operation of consultation on that subject. I would like to know whether in those consultations he met one person or one group, that is in favour of the bill under review.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, in answer to my hon. colleague, I can tell him I did meet . . . In the Province of Quebec, we have three federations, three organizations dealing with older citizens, representing thousands of people. They are FADOQ, AQDR and the Forum des citoyens du troisième âge. I met with these groups during the Christmas recess. There is no doubt these three organizations are opposed to any discrimination. I really cannot understand . . . if a journalist asks a Member of this House "Are you in favour of discrimination?", I do not think any Member, assuming he is not stupid, will answer "Yes". These three groups have asked questions. I mentioned earlier a telegram sent by one of them, but the other two groups as well made representations to the Prime Minister.

I think Members should visit groups of older citizens and meet with them. We are talking of 80,000 this year, but some people are going to turn 60 next year and will suffer the same discrimination because it will not end this year.

[English]

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a brief question to the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart). Will he vote against the Bill or for it?

[Translation]

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member probably does not know my style. At 12, I went on strike as an altar boy. I am 46 now. You surely remember that in those days it was unheard of, but I won. I was getting 5 cents a mass, but I immediately got the quarter I wanted, and I was kept on—I learned something then. I am not fighting for the sake of glory,

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I never do. I got through the worst Conservative landslide in my riding. I was not fighting for votes, but I had something on my mind. Whether or not my party was going to win the election was not the main issue for me. The issue was that I wanted to fight to avoid discrimination against 80,000 Canadians. I call upon all Hon. Members, whatever their party, to join in that fight. If they do, nothing can stop us!

[English]

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments on Bill C-26, an Act to amend the Old Age Security Act. Like other members of my Party, I have no intention of holding up the legislation because it provides some relief for one small group of senior citizens who are not covered by previous legislation. It extends spousal benefits to low income widows and widowers between the ages of 60 and 65. It is important to emphasize, as my colleagues have done, that the Bill does nothing for people who were never married or for people who are divorced. In fact, it does nothing for couples between the ages of 60 and 65, neither of whom has reached the age of 65. It illustrates illogical discrimination on the basis of marital status and is indicative of the patchwork approach of the Government toward pension reform. It really follows what the last Government did. It is a patchwork approach rather than a comprehensive one.

I should like to refer to some of the history of our pension system. When they were first introduced in 1926, they provided for a pension of \$20 per month for seniors over the age of 70, with a very strict means test. It was not much, but I was more than those people had before. We are proud of the founder of our Party, J. S. Woodsworth, in securing that for senior citizens of Canada. Through his efforts and the efforts of his successors, Stanley Knowles and others within the CCF and the NDP, as well as the efforts of other Parties, as has been pointed out, improvements have been made since then. The means test was abolished in 1952. During the sixties the age was gradually reduced from 70 to 65. I remember that my father was in the cross-over period, and I think he finally received the pension when he was 67. He was very thankful to get it. Later we introduced a partial means test for spousal allowance for those aged 60 to 65. Now we are extending that, as I pointed out, to widows and widowers who can pass an income test. This is well and good, but it does not go far enough.

The Government missed a golden opportunity to bring in the kind of comprehensive pension reform for which the Conservative Party called when it was in opposition last spring. Last May the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) introduced a motion of non-confidence in the Liberal Government. She did well to do so. She condemned the Government for its failure to deal adequately with the real needs of Canada's seniors and for not bringing in a comprehensive program.