

The problem of poverty in developed industrial societies is increasingly viewed not as a sheer lack of essentials to sustain life, but as an insufficient access to certain goods, services, and conditions of life which are available to everyone else and have come to be accepted as basic to a decent, minimum standard of living.

Those are valid reasons that should prompt the government to pass legislation aimed at guaranteeing a minimum level of income and security for people of 60.

We should not wait for all sorts of manifestations to happen to pass legislation providing older people with a suitable pension at the age of 60.

Legislation should also be geared toward creating a climate of security for older people so they can have some compensation for the years of hardships and economic distress that too many poor, particularly in our stupid system of today, had to suffer in a country as rich as ours. Society is not fulfilling all its obligations if all it does is look after the material well-being of the retired, without considering their emotional and psychological needs. It is a mistake to think that we can somehow send older people to the pasture by providing them with food, clothing and shelter.

Canada must try to make full use of the huge tank of ideas, skills and competence represented by its million and a half inhabitants over the age of 60.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but—

Mr. Fortin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hon. member for Lotbinière rises on a point of order.

Mr. Fortin: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order for two reasons. First, the opposition day allotted to the Social Credit Party of Canada under the Standing Orders of the House of Commons for the business of supply was much shortened this afternoon by the many points of order which were raised. Second, my colleague, the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne), was interrupted several times by members opposite. I feel therefore that it would be only proper that the House allow him a few minutes more to complete his speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hon. member is certainly aware that the hon. member for Kamouraska may complete his remarks only with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: Make it quick!

Mr. Dionne (Kamouraska): I am very grateful to my colleagues for these few additional minutes and I want to assure them right away that I shall not try their patience.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dionne (Kamouraska): Perhaps hon. members opposite have thought that I was about to offer my congratulations to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) concerning the New Horizons Program. This program allowed many of our senior citizens groups

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to show that they could make themselves useful through practical work and by organizing healthy recreational activities adapted to their age. I do not hesitate to congratulate the promoters of this program when I see its advantageous results. I hope that the necessary credits will be provided so as to maintain what I would call a program for the flowering of humanity.

There is something we should not forget when we talk of our senior citizens: life does have its disadvantages and the longer it lasts, the shorter it grows. It would only be normal that the period of hesitation should not be unduly prolonged before a bill is submitted so that 60-year-old Canadians can enjoy an adequate revenue and be assured of a pension at the requested age of 60.

We could make amendments to the present law. We have only to stop believing that it is not possible and we shall succeed.

• (2200)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. It being after ten o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Section 11 of Standing Order 58, the proceedings on the motion have expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

AIR TRANSPORT—CANADA-CUBA ROUTE—POSSIBLE COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, on October 16 I raised with the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) the question of completing negotiations for regular passenger service between Cuba and Canada. I was a little surprised at the minister's reply which seemed to indicate a lack of progress in this important matter. I had thought that after so long a period of discussion our two countries were closer to formal agreement.

As many in this House know, I have long been an advocate of closer trade and contact with the Caribbean area and in that area Cuba is an important, indeed very important, element. In 1971 it was my pleasure, along with the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) and the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin), to visit Cuba. I think we were the first group of Canadian parliamentarians to make an official visit to that island. There is a great potential for growth in that beautiful island, and their economic efforts merit great commendation. For those who denigrate the Castro regime, I suggest they recall or research the kind of Cuban society, the kind of Cuban government which preceded the present system of political organization.

One of the strong moves on the international scene by the government led by the right hon. gentleman from