

Disabled Persons Act

your freedom. This does not apply, of course, in our country or those countries that accept the concepts that we do.

When this government came into power we said that, among other things, we would improve the amount of social security being paid. I intend to mention the question of deficits because I hear deficits mentioned from time to time. I am going to give the opposition an opportunity to point out which of these items they would have eliminated had they been in office. When you examine the record you will find that if this government had not advanced assistance to the provinces and, indirectly, to the municipalities, and had not increased social security to a reasonable level, we would not have had deficits during the last several years. I want to give the opposition this opportunity to point out which of these items they would not have inaugurated had they been in office.

Certainly they had a surplus in 1956-57. They had a surplus, but at that time when we asked them to increase the amount of social security, they said "We are paying as much as we can". I will give the necessary quotations in a moment to support that statement. Here they were, with the provinces asking for extra assistance, and the municipalities too because after all when the provinces have made available to them the necessary funds, those funds in turn go to the municipalities. They had a surplus of which they boasted, and when we asked them to do something more than a \$6 increase in these various pension schemes the answer was that they were giving as much as they could. In other words they starved the old age pensioners. They starved those who were receiving blindness allowances. They starved the people in all these classifications in order to have a surplus. I am going to give them an opportunity to point out wherein they would have done otherwise.

In any country, no matter how effective the operation of private enterprise, there will always be those who, by reason of age or infirmity require assistance. Now, when the hon. gentlemen who represent—well, I suppose it is the C.C.F.-N.D.P.—speak about social security, they always say that the old parties do not give enough. I ask them to tell the house what extra payments and allowances have been made in the province of Saskatchewan, where a government of that party has been in power for about 18 years. An examination of their social security measures will show that that government generally pays less than several other provinces by way of assistance to the aged and to other groups. I give them this opportunity. They prate, and I ask them to place on the

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

record the facts in this connection. I await with interest the contribution they will make.

Those of us who believe in private enterprise think it is the prime and proper function of government to do everything it can to make the system function and assume an increasing measure of responsibility so there will be equalized opportunities for Canadians everywhere. The opposition talks about deficits. I would point out that there has been an increase in social security payments since 1956-57 of just about \$1 billion. I underline that amount. In 1956-57 the amount expended was \$1.3 billion, while the estimated amount this year is over \$2.3 billion. There was a small portion of these increases due to legislation passed in 1957 before we assumed office.

Mr. Pickersgill: A very high portion.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I beg your pardon?

Mr. Pickersgill: A very high portion.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, the Liberal government put the hospital legislation on the statute books. Who paid for it?

Mr. Pickersgill: The taxpayers.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, the taxpayers. I am glad to hear that because some \$180 million of our deficit is due to the fact that this legislation was on the statute books, and we had to meet the bill.

Mr. Pickersgill: Will the Prime Minister permit me to ask him a question?

Mr. Diefenbaker: No.

Mr. Pickersgill: I was going to ask him if he objects to that legislation.

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I always find these interruptions from over there can be heard by the reporters but not by us, and they find their way into *Hansard*. I would ask members of the opposition what portion of this extra billion dollars would they have done without in order to have a surplus. That is a very pertinent question.

Mr. Hellyer: The \$500 million in extra interest charges.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What does that little lamb say?

Mr. Hellyer: Hundreds of millions of dollars in extra interest charges.

Mr. Diefenbaker: While the population has increased there have been substantial increases in individual grants, in old age pensions, in old age security, blind and disability allowances, veterans pensions, retired civil servants' pensions, health grants and hospital insurance. A moment ago I said that in the past