

single rooms. We need to increase accessibility to non-profit housing for older Canadians. Last, and this will not solve all of the problems of senior citizens, we need to amend and improve the Old Age Security Act. The amount paid to a retired citizen must be raised so that no retired Canadian will live in poverty as so many of them do now. We need to increase the amount paid to pensioners and the pension must be fully indexed. Until that is done, members of this Party will not be satisfied with the proposals made by the Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments?

Mr. Stackhouse: Mr. Speaker, I listened with great appreciation to the speech of the Hon. Member and especially to the historical discourse he gave at the beginning of his speech. I certainly join with him in acknowledging the significant contributions made to the history of pensions in Canada by the late James Woodsworth and by Mr. Stanley Knowles. However, to be complete and accurate, as I am sure the Hon. Member would want us to be, he should have acknowledged at least two other significant contributions. One of them was the leadership given by the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker. In 1957, after having been elected partly on his commitment to increase old age pensions to a reasonable amount, he carried forward expeditiously the fulfilment of that promise, raising pensions from the inadequate \$46 with which the Liberal Government had been content to \$70 a month. That may not seem to be much to us now but in terms of 1957 dollars, it was an impressive amount.

I would also want history to include the very important contribution of the Hon. Robert Stanfield. In the election campaign of 1972, it was Bob Stanfield who introduced to Canada the idea of indexing old age pensions so that old age pensioners would not be the victims of inflation and so that the Government would not make a profit on inflation. During the campaign, that idea was derided by the Liberal Government of the time but—

Mr. Blaikie: Not the NDP.

Mr. Stackhouse: Maybe not, but the idea was introduced and pioneered not by the NDP but by the Progressive Conservative Party and its Leader. The idea received such approval and support from the media and the Progressive Conservative Party came so close to winning that election and forming the Government that the Liberal Party, clinging to office by the skin of its teeth, was shamed into introducing a proposal that it had derided during the election campaign. That was a very important addition to social improvement in Canada and it ought to be included in any record of such improvement.

Mr. Orlikow: Mr. Speaker, in the few moments I took to put on the record the parts played by two Members of Parliament from the part of Winnipeg which I represent, Mr. Woodsworth and Mr. Heaps, in getting our pension system started, I of course did not deal with all the people who worked for improving pensions over the years. I would never suggest for a moment that ours was the only Party and that NDP Members

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were the only people who advocated improvements in pensions. What I did say and what I will maintain is that we were the first and we have been consistent in that support.

Of course Mr. Diefenbaker improved the pension system. I wish that there were Progressive Conservatives like Mr. Diefenbaker in the present Government. I do not see many of them. What I see are Conservatives but I see very few if any progressives. As a matter of fact, I tried to indicate the difference between Progressive Conservative Members when they are in opposition and Progressive Conservative Members when they form the Government by putting on the record the speech made by the present Minister of Employment and Immigration when she was a member of the Opposition and comparing it with the actions of the present Government of which she forms a part.

There were Liberals like Mr. Paul Martin and Senator Croll who were great advocates of pensions. Of course, when one looks at the history of the pension system, one should give credit to all those people. There were many outside of Parliament who contributed as well. One of the most honourable and important roles in the fight for better pensions over the years as well as today was and is played by the trade unions of the country which have been among the foremost advocates of improving the pension system.

I am prepared to give credit where credit is due. I would say to the Hon. Member for Scarborough West (Mr. Stackhouse) that if and when the present Government brings in the kind of improvements it promised when it was in opposition, I will be very quick to support it and give it credit for that. However, I am afraid that given the state of the economy, in which I do not see any real improvements in the next few years, we will hear the usual excuses from the Conservative Government that we used to hear from the Liberal Government, which is that the economy is just not good enough to allow the Government to make those improvements.

Yes, we have difficulties. Yes, we have a deficit. Although this is not the time to go into it in great detail, I would say that there were over 8,000 Canadians who had incomes of over \$50,000 a year who did not pay a penny in income tax. There are corporations which have hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred corporate taxes, taxes which some of them have admitted they will never pay. I do not agree with those Conservatives who have suggested that they know that what the Government is proposing does not do everything but that it is a first step and the Government cannot afford to do more. I say to the Hon. Member for Scarborough West that if the Government wanted to do more, it could do more. If it taxed the people who would be paying the taxes, the money would be there.

• (1700)

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). The serious problems which senior citizens in the country face are important. In my riding there is a serious problem which pertains to the Minister of State for Science and Technology