

*Old Age Security*

Mr. Chairman, I am stating these facts to draw the attention of the House to the work that we have accomplished, and not only for electoral purposes. I congratulate the government—it had to do it—on having managed at least to give \$341.80 to an aged couple. This is getting close to what we were asking for, that is \$350. That \$341.80 is not too bad. People aged 65 or more will do a little better with that.

But I deplore, on the other hand, that the government, the minister, has not introduced a legislation in favour of the sick, the crippled, the blind, the welfare cases. This morning, I received a letter—

**An hon. Member:** That is under provincial jurisdiction.

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** True, but they should have convinced the provinces of that ten years ago.

**An hon. Member:** We pay 50 per cent.

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** That is right. I received a letter from a mother from Saint-Jérôme; she has five children at home, pays a rent of \$80 a month and gets \$147 in welfare allowances, half being paid by the federal government. How can they believe that a mother with five children can live with \$147 a month?

I am in favour of paying an old age pension of \$341.80 for two people, but I should be in favour of paying a pension of \$400 for instance to a needy mother with five children at home.

I ask the minister some questions; the minister answers with a smile, he is so kind, he is a good guy, he answers that Quebec is paying one half and we are paying the other. Quebec says: "We do not have our half, and if you do not have yours, well, we do not have it either! Then, the pension is not increasing!

Well, Mr. Chairman, it is very important to look after the invalid, the disabled, the blind and the welfare cases, not after thieves. Let us give them pension increases so that they can live properly.

Mr. Chairman, this was a matter I had to clear. My colleagues and I will support this bill; we shall try to have the age of eligibility for this pension lowered to 60. If the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) will let go of the purse strings—he will ask for it? Fine! The day before yesterday, he told me that he would meet here, at the end of this month, with provincial representatives to discuss the possibility of lowering this age for the interested party and also examine the spouse's situation.

I hope the minister is taking notes of our requests; I do not want at all to get the credit for it, the minister will get it. We shall be satisfied with passing measures to improve the living conditions of the Canadian people as a whole.

[*English*]

**Mr. McKinnon:** Mr. Chairman, speaking to this bill I wish to deal mainly with the high cost of living. I then intend to make some remarks on the economy. Some members opposite would like to pretend that the package presented on September 4 was designed to curb or stop inflation. This is, of course, nonsense. Inflation is not caused by old age pensions being too low. It is not caused by retired civil servants receiving pensions which do not

[Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue).]

keep up with rising prices. The two bills, C-219 and C-220, will not affect inflation in the slightest. So let us not parrot the local headline writer who wrote "Government clamps down on inflation". Perhaps that headline in the Ottawa *Citizen* was the right length to fit the space available, but it would certainly mislead anyone naïve enough to assume that headlines refer to the stories upon which they are placed. These two bills are designed, I suppose, to render a temporary palliative to the sickness of inflation. They make no attempt to cure the disease, and to claim they do is about as truthful and realistic as to claim that aspirins cure cancer.

Let us consider the plight of three large groups in our society—those on fixed incomes, those operating small businesses and those workers who are not enrolled in powerful, multinational unions. First, take the position of those on fixed incomes, the pensioners. The government's plan is to allow inflation to go unchecked and raise pensions when forced to do so. The Minister of National Health and Welfare should have been ashamed to bring in this bill without apologizing to the elderly of the nation for the months of needless mental distress he caused them by his remark last May that he would not bring in quarterly adjustments because to do so would mean an administrative nightmare. But what else could one expect from this erstwhile grey eminence of the Liberal administration? In the meantime his department has been decreasing such things as grants for cancer research.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but it being five o'clock it is my duty to rise, report progress and request leave to sit again later this day.

Progress reported.

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Brandon Souris (Mr. Dinsdale)—Post Office; the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight)—Agriculture; the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Blenkarn)—Labour Relations.

● (1700)

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, private bills, notice of motions (papers), public bills.