

among individuals, families and companies within the Canadian economy in 1973, in our present government.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we could do with the present monetary system, if only it was really set up in a way to give satisfaction and do more justice to all Canadians.

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, in view of this capital legislation, we would be tempted to wonder why hon. members are losing their time making speeches when they all agree. Politics is rather curious. If a member refuses to speak, to say that he agrees or disagrees, there will always be someone to claim that he dared not state his views or that he was opposed to this relief given by the government to the aged.

So it is important on the occasion of a debate on such a legislation that very briefly every one voice his approval or disapproval so that our views be on the record. At least, we have given an opinion.

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy if we discussed the bill in a less partisan way than in the beginning. I was surprised indeed when the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) got carried away in his first words. He was not satisfied with introducing a pretty valuable legislation, he took advantage of the situation to launch partisan attacks, to discredit upon what may have been done when Conservatives were in power, to reserve for himself and the Liberal party the merit of this legislation and previous bills, claiming that in the field of social security and social progress, the people opposite possess the whole truth.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that people who heard speeches from the gallery or read *Hansard* wonder why we have to play partisan politics on the backs of senior citizens, children or welfare recipients. On the contrary, it seems to me that if the treasury is in a position to give more relief to the aged, it is the Crown, Parliament which is responsible for it. No political party or politician can lay claim to all the merits of a legislation for himself or his colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the pretexts or excuses to justify those positions. Within a few days the members of the government will participate in a great annual convention which will take place September 15 and where they will consider the attitude of the Canadian public towards their party last October. They will probably come to the conclusion that the Canadian people have been extremely wise and they will probably also conclude that the convention of September 15 may be followed by another one where they will be able to decide once and for all what will happen to their party.

Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, I believe that speeches with electoral undertones such as those given here should be set aside for other occasions, and I urge the Minister of National Health and Welfare to repeat, maybe even more violently, the first part of his remarks before his supporters at the convention. This convention will open at the same time as the official statistics on the cost of living are published, in September. Maybe Liberal supporters will then also come to the conclusion that this government is unable to solve the problem of the cost of living and the problems of the Canadian economy. In fact, one crisis follows another while the government hopes for a miracle from one week to the next, but certainly this miracle does

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not consist in legislation as inadequate and ineffective as that which we are studying today.

● (1650)

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): That is not partisanship!

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, we are quite willing not to be partisan, as the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) says and to give justice to those who deserve it. But what strikes me is not so much the gist of this legislation, but the attitude, the overbearing manner, the spirit in which it is introduced, similar to that which the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) showed in introducing the bill, and that in which the Minister of Transport responded at noon today, by quoting statistics, to a deeply human problem, for instance, that experienced by the expropriated people of Sainte-Scholastique. Reacting with the arrogance our hon. friends opposite have showed for some time will not develop trust in our political leaders and institutions among the Canadian people.

Mr. Speaker, I will talk about this bill. I am quite willing to say that escalating old age pensions in line with the cost of living has some merit. However, it should be recognized that a year ago almost to the day, we traveled across the land and solemnly promised to increase these pensions and, in co-operation with the provinces, stated that escalations of these pensions in line with the cost of living index would be necessary so that these periodic readjustments would not be immediately eaten up by the increases in the cost of living. I even pointed out at that time that obviously this would not permanently solve the problem. I feel that there are other values which are much more important than that of purchasing power and which are certainly not properly served by an increase of a few cents or a few dollars.

You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that at that time our friends opposite retorted, as reported on the first page of the newspapers: The Progressive Conservative Party members, especially Wagner, are making stupid and unconsidered promises. And these same Liberals only had, Mr. Speaker, to be barely returned to power and to remain in power, thanks to the NDP's systematic prostitution and to be hard pressed by a dynamic, alert, courageous and powerful opposition, to adjust their firing—that is part of an excellent strategy,—and to make their own several Progressive Conservative commitments, among which the subject matter of Bill C-219. Therefore, let us give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar: Let us recognize where the good things come from and let us accept them for the good of the Canadian people.

Let us stop playing a hypocritical game.

Of course, we will vote for this measure to amend the Old Age Security Act in order to provide quarterly adjustments, to the pension and guaranteed income supplement based on the quarterly increases in the consumer price index. However these provisions affect only the present pensioners and in no way reach people of 60 to 65 years of age. While waiting for a guaranteed minimum income policy, I ask the government to specify its views on the possible and gradual eligibility of Canadians aged from 60 to 65 years to the old age security pension. I ask the government to deal with the situation of the citizen of 60