

Old Age Security

work. That comes as no surprise to the government. It is well aware of it. I am also convinced that it is not indifferent to that unfortunate state of affairs. I think it would be in the interest of the country to allow the people of 60 to 65, who want to retire, to do so and make way for the young people so that they, in turn, can give their full measure in order to deserve, when they reach a certain age, and have grown older, that right to security in old age. They must be given that opportunity. I am sure that if the government would agree to this motion, we would see a great improvement. There is no need hiding the fact, we are going through hard times and many homes are near poverty.

I would not want to dramatize the situation, but as an example, on Saturday last, November 12, at eight o'clock in the morning, someone rang my doorbell. There was this man in his thirties who introduced himself and asked if it was the home of the member of parliament. Yes, I said, and you are speaking to him now. You want to see me? He said: Yes, indeed. So I asked him in but he added: Wait until I go and fetch my "gang". I did not know what he meant. He came back with his wife and four kids, from 2 to 11 years old. There, he briefed me on his situation. He was not begging, he just wanted me to help him find a job. This man wants to earn a decent living for his family. While listening, I realized he was in a depressed mood, but he was in fact in good spirit. He wants to work to earn his living, but there is no job where he lives. As for unemployment insurance benefits, he does not like them because he knows very well that this is not a good way of providing himself with a regular income. As for welfare, he says he is too young to consider that.

● (1730)

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of poor people. Parliament should decide to urge the government to amend the legislation referred to in the motion. Things cannot get worse than they are now. Will that cost more? I do not think so. Some reliable calculations have been made. If we could get back to work those we allow to live on welfare and who can work, we would not have to pay any more for them. They would pay taxes which would bring revenues into the national treasury, and 60 year old people would be able to get old age security benefits. That would be an exchange, even though that might cost a few million dollars more. In my opinion, Canada would benefit from this experience.

Recently I read a statement from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) which has been reported in the newspapers; in any event, I believe it is true and until I get proof to the contrary I must believe what is published in newspapers where he was quoted as having said that "Canadians are too thrifty, they save too much. They do not spend enough". And he added: "They spend their money in Florida".

Mr. Speaker, those who spend their money in Florida earn enough income to get there. But they are not the ones who should be helped. No, we must help those who do not have enough revenues, such as middle and small income workers, those who do not have enough. They will spend their money in

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

Canada, not elsewhere. It is obvious that if we increase their income, we will allow them to spend more, we will stimulate the economy because those people usually buy the things they need every day.

That is precisely the problem today. We have a number of industries which do not operate to their full capacity, others are closing their doors. There are dramatic bankruptcies because they cannot sell their production and, at the same time, there are people who cannot afford the strict minimum. We are struggling in a vicious circle, like a dog trying to catch its tail and running around and around. This is the situation we are coping with.

For these people, inflation is a very serious problem. It means ever soaring prices which prevent those who do not get wage increases from meeting their every day needs. Inflation affects particularly these individuals and these families and the situation is getting worse from week to week, from month to month.

With regard to electricity in the province of Quebec—I prefer taking examples in my own province—in 1962 the Quebec government decided to nationalize electricity because this would help us become masters in our own house.

We could see in the papers the key of the "Masters in our own house". It was so long that it could not be put on the same photo from bottom to top. It had to be put across the page to make the "Masters in our own house" more precise. Let us consider the increase in hydro rates today. I shall probably be told that it is because of the James Bay development which is so costly. It has cost \$6 billion so far and the total outlay is estimated now at \$24 billion. I read in a report that it is going to cost \$18 billion in interest alone. Herein lies the disorder, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, if money is to be remunerated more and more, once, twice, three times, four times, five times, a lot of money will go there and we will be unable to meet our obligations and ensure a decent living to the aged. It is also clear we will be unable to develop our economy, and our industries, and unemployment will increase. By the way, predictions are that unemployment will reach enormous proportions next winter.

When I hear such things I get depressed. Recently I heard somebody, someone highly learned, suggest that a war was the only thing to correct the situation, who said that? I will not name him, out of respect. A war was needed, some other people would have to be killed but not ourselves. Such is war, someone killing others. I have known two wars in my lifetime, the first and second world wars. What did they solve? They were supposed to end all problems. Well this has created temporary jobs but also resulted in huge indebtedness. And once the war was over, what could we do? We went back to that old habit—depression. Was the depression experienced between 1930 and 1940 caused by some scholarly crisis in the economic system? Not at all. The crisis was in the system itself. The proof is that history is repeating itself. After World War I, there was a period of inflation, short lived prosperity. From 1929 to 1939, there was real depression, systematic misery. At that time some people said a war was needed to