

compliment members of the Senate, but this committee has been doing fine work. The Economic Council of Canada had issued figures establishing the poverty line and Senator Croll's committee brought these figures up-to-date. Now it is estimated that a single person with an income of less than \$3,200 a year, or a family of four with an income of less than \$4,500 a year is living in poverty. This means that a large percentage of the people who do not qualify for the income supplement are living in poverty, yet these are the people who will be locked into poverty in the future by this bill.

Mr. Speaker, who are these rich people who will not receive the guaranteed income supplement, who will be limited to an increase of 42 cents a month—less than ten cents a week, as estimated by my hon. friend from Broadview (Mr. Gilbert)? The single person over 65 years of age who has other income of \$110 a month will not qualify for the supplement. Is the single person earning \$190 a month or \$2,280 a year the person the Prime Minister was referring to when he said that the rich would have to pay to help the poor? I do not accept that. I know that the people of Canada will not accept it. I suppose we ought to be thankful for small mercies. Because of the increased benefits to be brought in, the number of people in the group I have talked about will be reduced from 800,000 to 500,000. I am referring to people with incomes between \$3,500 and \$4,000 a year.

• (3:30 p.m.)

What we are proposing to do in this bill is much too little for our citizens who will live in the affluent Canada of the 1970s, and it is much too late. We in this party have proposed a pension of \$150 a month payable at age 65 without any means or needs test or other income qualification. I expect it is too much to expect this government to accept that proposal. They would say it is too generous and that we cannot afford it. I deny that. This debate is not an occasion for discussing what we can or cannot afford in this country. If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare really want to know what we can afford, I suggest they should look at the recommendations of the Carter commission and then scrutinize the tremendous tax loopholes as a result of which oil companies, gas companies, land speculators, builders and others like them either escape the payment of taxes or pay very small amounts in taxes.

If we were to plug these tax loopholes, our proposal for paying \$150 a month to everyone aged 65 and over would not be impractical at all. Even in the present circumstances I suggest that we could very easily think about a pension of \$100 a month for those aged 65 and over, plus a guaranteed income supplement of \$50 a month for a total of \$150 a month. I do not for a moment believe we cannot afford that. I do not for a moment believe that if we had a fair taxation system, which at present we do not, the people of Canada would object to that kind of pension being given to our old people.

I now want to deal with another subject that has arisen repeatedly in this debate. The other day the hon. member

### *Old Age Security*

for York East (Mr. Otto) castigated members of this party because we kept pleading for a universal old age pension plan. As we listened to him, it became obvious that for him and the government as a whole universality has become a dirty word. May I remind hon. members that it was a Liberal government which first eliminated the means test from the old age pension legislation; it was a Liberal government which made the old age pension universal.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** After 20 years of prodding.

**Mr. Orlikow:** Of course, they had to be prodded. We shall continue prodding them. But it was a Liberal government which did that. I felt sorry that Liberal members such as the hon. member for York East virtually apologize for that. I think they ought to be proud of it. It was a Liberal government that established the hospitalization insurance plan. When the debate on the hospital insurance plan was taking place, I remember that the former Conservative Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Roblin, argued very vehemently that the people of Canada did not need a universal hospital insurance plan and that all that was necessary was for the government to implement a hospital insurance plan for those who could not afford the sort of private plan to which others already belonged.

A former Minister of National Health and Welfare who is now the government House leader in the Senate, Senator Martin, demolished that argument completely and proved that the best way of providing for hospital insurance was through a universal plan to which everyone belonged and to which everyone contributed. It was a Liberal government, Mr. Speaker, which established a medical insurance plan based on universality. The same arguments were advanced then.

I remember the Conservative Premier of Manitoba arguing that we did not need a universal medical insurance plan, that we already had plans such as the Manitoba medical services private, non-profit plan and that there were commercial insurance companies such as the Great West Life which already insured a substantial percentage of the Canadian people. He argued that therefore we did not need a universal medical insurance plan. Mr. Roblin proposed that the medical insurance plan should cover only those people who were not already covered. Yet it was a Liberal government which decided, correctly, that the best way of meeting the needs of the Canadian people was through a universal insurance plan, a plan into which every citizen of Canada paid what he was required to pay and from which every citizen of Canada received benefits. The plan would pay certain of his medical bills.

**Mr. Rock:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Orlikow:** I see the hon. member from the area of Montreal, who perhaps is the greatest exponent of private enterprise in this House, applauding what I have