

Old Age Pensions

Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) so I shall not pursue my argument further, but I do submit that since the point has been raised the references I have given should be studied before the point comes up again on another occasion.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, may I just briefly say that I certainly did not suggest that the hon. member had no right to discuss old age pensions and assistance at this time. What I was complaining about was that this was not a motion to discuss monetary policy which may have some, but only some, bearing on this matter. The hon. member can discuss the need to improve old age pensions and that sort of thing but I was suggesting that this was not the time to engage in a discussion of monetary theory.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am afraid we are interfering with the hon. member for Lethbridge at too great length. I was very glad to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). This point is one of considerable difficulty and interest and I will be glad to take his remarks into consideration.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Speaker, if anyone were to rise and advocate a pension of \$60 per month at the age of 60 in a country of which 90 per cent was desert anyone would be justified in asking how in the world we could produce goods to support that pension. One of the most important things would be that one would have to satisfy oneself that we have sufficient goods and a sufficient level of production to enable us to provide such a standard of living.

But having established that there will be plenty of goods, one has to satisfy oneself next as to whether there is a method of making these goods available to the old age pensioners. If that cannot be done then certainly the strength of my appeal on behalf of old age pensioners will be greatly vitiated. Consequently, I fail to see how a person could make a real case for increasing old age pensions in Canada without referring to the method by which that production, once it is brought into existence, can be placed in the hands of elderly people without taking so much in taxation from the population as to render the burden unbearable.

I spent some time on that subject and it was not my intention to discuss Social Credit. I merely wished to show that to any person facing existing facts realistically it is an absolute outrage for us to deprive our elderly citizens of the good things of life.

I am rather surprised that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) should rise on a point of order when a method

was being suggested by which, if he acted on the suggestion, he could strengthen his hand tremendously in doing the thing he surely wants to do. Certainly the Minister of National Health and Welfare wishes to increase the old age pension to \$60 a month if means can be found whereby that can be done. But for him to raise a point of order when the problem is being solved for him surprises me considerably.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre for what both of you have said, but if hon. members of this house do not want to learn these things then I suppose we shall have to stop discussing them lest we offend them.

I was about to point out that there will be those who will claim that in connection with the use of the device I referred to, and I referred to the Finance Act of 1914, nothing effective can be done. But I would point out that, under the Finance Act of 1914, \$16 million were created and brought into circulation by the Minister of Finance and that sum was backed only by railway securities. What has been done in the past can surely be done again, and if it cannot be done again then certainly an explanation ought to be forthcoming as to why it cannot be done again.

That was all I was dealing with. I had intended to say something about the remarks of the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Jones) when he maintained the other day that such a procedure would cause inflation. I had intended to show that he was in error when he supposed that the operation of this act would cause inflation. I was also going to refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Saskatoon (Mr. Knight). He displayed some anxiety and felt that if we used the finance acts of 1914 and 1923 we would be placing in the hands of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) a very powerful weapon which he might use to the detriment of the nation. I was going to point out that when the minister of finance created money under the finance acts of 1914 and 1923 every dollar he created had to be created with the specific permission of parliament, and every dollar he spent had to be spent with the particular permission of parliament. In the same fashion, we must now have the permission of parliament in order to raise money as is prescribed in each budget, and the estimates under which that money is spent receive the scrupulous scrutiny of members of parliament. It is therefore obvious that parliament now controls the behaviour of the Minister of Finance. In a similar manner parliament would control the actions of the minister administering a finance act like that of 1914 or of 1923.

[Mr. Knowles.]