

deal to the building of the country. Many of them are very elderly and in need. We owe it to them, through any sense of justice which we might collectively hold, to get the CPR and the CNR to loosen up the purse strings and provide those elderly pensioners with the income they deserve.

**Mr. McKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the comment which was made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie). As of yesterday, I received a communication from the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) which indicated that action will be taken on the railway pensioners' situation. The Minister is quite familiar with the problem. I think there have been enough studies on railway pensioners; therefore I am pressing for fast action with respect to CN and CP pensions.

**Mr. Della Noce:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to my hon. colleague from the NDP. I have only been here for four months. I am sad that my colleagues in the Opposition always talk about the past. I was not even born in 1926. I am surprised that his Party criticizes the Government as it does. I believe the NDP should be the first to join us in something positive. The NDP should not be concerned with 1926. I am concerned about 1985 and 1986, because I too have old people in my constituency.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I can repeat what I said earlier, namely that it is a beginning. It is certainly not enough. I find this initiative interesting and I am sure we could do more if we had more money, but this first step represents progress, and I am ready to defend my party. I am proud of being here to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart).

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Hon. Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) has some talent in the field of energy, but he did not impress us today in the area of social legislation. He had a good speech prepared by the Library, but I would like to ask him one question.

● (1550)

I would like to know, and this is the question that I ask all Conservative Members of Parliament, how, in all conscience, the Prime Minister could decide that a widow or widower aged between 60 and 64 with a very low income could be facing more hardship than someone else in the same situation who is only separated.

I understand that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Côté) could make a compromise to please everyone where the metric system is concerned, but this bill deals with human beings. I am convinced that this legislation affects people even in the constituency of Duvernay as it concerns a total of 80,000 people, including 30,000 in Quebec. In all conscience, how can the Hon. Member say that he will help

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only half of them this year? Would it not have been better instead since he is an energy expert, to take the increase of three cents a litre on the price of gasoline and use it to help these 80,000 people? Would this not have been better?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The Hon. Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce).

**Mr. Della Noce:** I will speak briefly, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank my colleague for his kind words. It is a fact that I worked for 20 years in the energy area trying to make a positive contribution. I would now like to reassure my colleague that my conscience is perhaps more at peace than his own. I can also tell him that the last increase in the price of energy is not 3 cents but only 1.1 cent. If you want to go back to 1942, as my colleague did, it is another matter but if you refer to the tax last year, it is also a different thing. You have been here for a very long time and you may have more experience than I do on the matter, while I have more in the energy sector, but we are now dealing with Bill C-26. What did you do in the past to improve the program? We are trying to improve it and you had the opportunity to state your views. Perhaps if I had been here for 8 or 10 years, gas would not now be that expensive in Quebec.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The period for questions and comments has now expired. We will resume debate.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted with this opportunity to contribute to the debate on Bill C-26, whose purpose is to extend the spouse's allowance by providing a similar allowance for widows and widowers. We agree that widows and widowers in this country between the ages of sixty and sixty-five, many of whom are in need, certainly deserve and need Government assistance. That is why our Party is in agreement on the principle of the Bill and will support a measure to have this allowance paid to widows and widowers in this country. However, Mr. Speaker, although the Bill as such is a good piece of legislation, it is incomplete. As other Hon. Members mentioned earlier, there are many Canadians in the same age group who are just as much in need and are facing problems similar to those faced by widows and widowers, and I am referring to people who are single, separated or divorced or have any status other than that of widow or widower. They will be getting nothing. In fact, the numbers involved are quite considerable. Bill C-26 will benefit about 85,000 widows and widowers in this country. However, there are 80,000 Canadians who will receive absolutely nothing as a result of this measure. That is why we on this side of the House say it is a discriminatory measure.

I advise all Members of this House, and especially those on the Government side who are supporting this Bill, to listen very carefully to their constituents. What are people talking