

Expansion of Social Security

Canada could also afford to pay a pension to people aged 65 years or more who do not work full time, and to grant them medical care. The aims of Social Credit, as concerns assistance to the aged, would be:

1. An insurance plan for medical care paid by the government to any person over 65 years of age.
2. The qualifying age for old age pension would be lowered to 65 years for all those whose yearly income is below the income tax exemption level.
3. The pension rate for aged people would be increased.

Mr. Speaker, this proves to hon. members that our group has always been concerned with social legislation.

Also, as the hon. member said in his notice of motion, amendments should be provided in the legislation granting a pension to disabled persons or to others affected by some ailment and condemned to remain inactive.

Here, I would like to recall, in a few words, an intervention, which I found particularly clever, from the hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière (Mr. Paul) on Monday last, when he said, as mentioned on page 4317 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, I feel the government should make the necessary changes to broaden the scope of the act or to make its benefits more readily available because, as I said a while ago, it often happens that a person who suffers from diabetes, asthma or heart trouble cannot qualify for a pension under the Disabled Persons Act.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that this matter of amending our social legislation meets with unanimous approval, and I am a little disappointed—not that I want to blame anyone—to see the small number of members in the house to discuss as important a matter as the one which is now under consideration. I am often absent myself, but I sincerely believe that if all hon. members wanted to make the effort, they could take more interest in the study of such matters. Then they would be more justified, during election campaigns, to talk at length about that matter and even to use in a most deplorable demagogic manner other people's miseries.

Mr. Speaker, we are lucky to live in such a rich country as Canada and I think that it would be an insult to the Creator and to Providence if we were unable to organize in order to take advantage of the many resources which were given to us.

I have here a comparative table of the salaries paid to workmen in various countries of the world. I know that this comparison is somewhat unsatisfactory, but I think that the salary level nevertheless gives a rather accurate idea of the standards of living which exist in those various countries. I see that

[Mr. Frenette.]

Canada is second, with an average salary of \$1.89 an hour; this brings me to make a comparison with some measures of social security now in effect in other countries much less favoured than ours. Like the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre I feel that it is urgent to act, instead of just talking and using the question for political purposes.

A few weeks ago, the Gospel reminded us of the parable of the lost sheep, in which we see that the good shepherd, when he realizes that one of his sheep is missing, must leave the others to go and look for the one which needs his care.

That parable, I think, could inspire those who are governing us and remind them that it is not really the people who have everything from the point of view of wealth and security that they should be worried about, but those who are in want, although not necessarily poverty stricken, and who are quite unable to meet the requirements imposed upon them by their responsibilities.

We should help the poor and the needy a great deal more. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) referred a while ago to the figure of about \$3 million. In my opinion, that is an eloquent figure which deserves our attention in view of its importance.

A while ago, the hon. member for Dorchester (Mr. Boutin) asked the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) if he was taking into account the increase in income tax compared with the increase in old age pensions, the pensions to the blind and others. I noted that the hon. member did not try too hard to give a better answer than was necessary. This leads me to ask the following question: If the Canadian parliament were not called upon to pay today, merely in interest, an amount of a billion dollars a year, would it not be easier then to establish social welfare legislation which would protect our fellow citizens from difficulties.

I conclude my remarks by leaving this thought to hon. members' meditation. Let us try to find a means to eliminate this huge interest of approximately a billion dollars and then distribute this same amount, according to need, to those who are now living in insecurity and poverty.

I hope earnestly that this notice of motion will come to a vote, so that we can be aware of those who really want to ensure the welfare of their fellow citizens and who have a real sense of responsibility as the people's representatives.