

Old Age Security Act Amendment

on with the guaranteed income approach. This is what he said in reply to a question I put to him, and I asked him the question because I had in mind this very point, this very amendment, when we were considering the Canada Assistance Plan. I asked him, "How do you find out the income", and he replied:

Obviously, if you have an income maintenance program you have got to find out what income a person has . . . I am sure the minister knows that as well as I do.

Of course we know that, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) might suggest that we would get this income information by some process of extra-terrestrial perception, as he calls it, but this is an uncertain method to derive the income information we require for this program. In this legislation we are carrying out precisely the recommendations of the Senate special committee on aging, proposals which were energetically and enthusiastically endorsed by the leader of the N.D.P., by the deputy leader, and by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). We are putting into effect the proposals made by the Senate committee on aging which the N.D.P. endorsed in June. But this is December. This is what the Senate committee said:

● (9:20 p.m.)

The establishment of an income guarantee program to provide allowances throughout life to all persons, beginning at age 65, on the following lines:

(c) that the procedure call for the completion of a simplified income form annually and that the amount by which the declared income falls short of the established minima in any year constitute the benefit of the year following.

That is the recommendation of the Senate committee on aging. The next point is that there be sample checks periodically to catch abuses but no means or needs test inquiries on traditional lines. That is precisely what we are doing in this legislation. We are carrying out the recommendation of the Senate committee. I should like to remind the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill) that this is a report which has been endorsed by some of the leading luminaries of his party such as a former cabinet minister, a former minister who served with him in the former government, the party's one-time national organizer and a one-time adviser emeritus from the home territory of the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. Do the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre and his colleagues suggest that these venerable and respected followers of the Conservative party

[Mr. MacEachen.]

are snooper-lovers as he has suggested in respect of this bill, legislation which follows the Senate committee's recommendation? I wager that when this bill gets to the other place none of these Conservative gentlemen who served on this committee will have a word to say in opposition to these proposals.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has stated: When we are using the Senate recommendation, the proposals endorsed by the deputy leader of the New Democratic Party, we do so because we do not trust the old age pensioners.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I did not say a word about what the minister has just mentioned.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, at page 11,065 of *Hansard* the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre is reported as having said: He—

Referring to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

—obviously does not trust the old age pensioners.

Mr. Churchill: What does that have to do with the report of the committee?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Churchill: On a point of order, I said nothing about the report of the Senate and House of Commons committee. That is what we were talking about.

Mr. MacEachen: I quite agree. I am just saying that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has stated that we do not trust the old age pensioners.

Mr. Churchill: That is right, and I repeat it.

Mr. MacEachen: Of course we do not accept such a view nor the view expressed by the hon. member, for example, for Prince Edward-Lennox who said:

There will be many instances of unrecorded income . . . people are not dumb; they will not always report everything.

We do not accept that view. We believe that most of the old age pensioners will report their incomes and that the check that will be made in the manner in which it was described yesterday will be effective, will be humane, and will respect the dignity of the Canadian old age pensioner. The purpose of this amendment is to strike out, to reconsider the income test in respect of this legislation. We regard it as an important feature of the legislation and