

Canada Assistance Plan

which welcomed the advent of the Canada Assistance Plan. The parts he quoted are on the record and there is no need for me to quote them again. For the most part they were unqualified approval of the general nature of the Canada Assistance Plan, with a particular reference to the change from a means test to a needs test. I should like to point out two things; first, this was before the Canada Labour Congress had seen the bill and, second, even with regard to the parts which appear to have its approval, it suggested there should be a different formula for the sharing of costs and that it should be on a sliding scale along the lines of the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act. The minister did not read that. However, the important thing to which I want to draw the attention of the house is that the minister started reading at the middle of page 24 and did not note the paragraph just before that, particularly the last few sentences just before the point at which he started to read.

The previous paragraph speaks of the tremendous difficulty our senior citizens have in trying to get by on the \$75 pension under the Old Age Security Act. The Canadian Labour Congress said this:

There can be no disputing the fact that the aged in Canada have not been enabled to share in the growing prosperity of the country. They have been sidetracked from it to live as best they can on the limited income maintenance programs which now apply to them.

Then listen to this; this is the last sentence before the minister started to quote from the brief of the Canadian Labour Congress:

We urge you to amend the Old Age Security Act further, not only to make the benefit available immediately as of age 65 but to raise the benefit itself to \$100 a month.

Mr. Speaker, that is what the Canadian Labour Congress wants the government to do.

Mr. MacEachen: That is the Old Age Security Act.

Mr. Knowles: Yes, and that is what the Canadian Labour Congress wants to be used as a vehicle to meet the needs of our older people. The Canadian Labour Congress did not regard the Canada Assistance Plan as a vehicle to deal with old age at all, and yet the minister last night tried to quote the Canadian Labour Congress as though it was asking for this.

Mr. Speaker, as an opposition member I think I have made it pretty clear that there are things in this bill that are good, but also I

[Mr. Knowles.]

am terribly conscious, as I think are most of the people of Canada, of what this bill does not do—its shortcomings. Therefore I think the very suggestion by Dr. Davis which the Minister of National Health and Welfare quoted is what parliament should demand. I am just as anxious as anyone else to have a summer holiday, but I think we should stay here and demand, until we get it, a parallel piece of legislation which will deal with old age security at the same time as we deal with the Canada Assistance Plan.

Therefore, to bring this about, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis):

That Bill C-207 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this house the government should give consideration to the immediate introduction of concurrent legislation providing for an old age pension of \$100 a month, without a means or needs test, for all persons 65 years of age and over.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair would like to have an opportunity to consider the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). May the house grant permission to the Chair to reserve judgment for the time being, and continue with the debate on second reading.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been suggested to me that I read the amendment and then reserve judgment on it. It is moved by Mr. Knowles, seconded by Mrs. MacInnis:

That Bill C-207 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the government should give consideration to the immediate introduction of concurrent legislation providing for an old age pension of \$100 a month, without a means or needs test, for all persons 65 years of age and over.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, you said judgment would be reserved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The minister has risen on a point of order.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what your intention is with regard to making a ruling, but I should like to reserve my right to argue that this particular amendment clearly and definitely is out of order. It is surprising that it should have been brought forward, because it is so blatantly out of order.