

Old Age Security Act Amendment

Those who have some private income in addition to their pensions, and this would be indicated when they filed their income tax returns, would not be entitled to any additional payment.

This is an endorsement of the principles contained in this measure. Of course the amounts are different but the principles are the same. Later the deputy leader of the New Democratic Party said:

We in our party, as our leader stated the other day, are looking forward to the day when assistance to people who require it will be based on the concept of a guaranteed annual income or some form of income maintenance. If a person's income does not add up to the level which has been set, then his income will be augmented up to that level.

That is a declaration of the principle which is established in the bill. Having in mind the program that we were developing I asked the deputy leader of the New Democratic Party a question. I said I was interested in knowing whether he supported the income test in principle. He said:

Obviously...otherwise you cannot have an income maintenance program. I am sure the minister knows that as well as I do.

The hon. member said that in order to administer an income guaranteed program one has to find out what income a person has.

Later, at page 7210 of *Hansard* for July 5, 1966, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) said:

We require some general program providing a guaranteed annual income for a person or a family through the application of a negative income tax or some other method whereby, without the humiliation of a test and by a simple declaration of personal income, society makes up the difference between what a person or a family in fact has by way of income and that which, according to budgetary analyses, that person or his family requires to live on in their way, not in my way or in the way of the social welfare worker but in their way.

We have here a declaration by the leader and the deputy leader of the New Democratic Party which show them to be in agreement with the approach of the government, first of all, to the concept of a guaranteed annual income. We are making a start by applying the guaranteed annual income concept, as recommended by the Senate to a particular group in the population, namely, the recipients of old age security. This concept is the first element of the agreement. The second element is that income should be augmented up to a certain level. First you find out what a person's income is and then you bring the level of his income up to the specified amount. We are in agreement on that and this is what

the measure does. Finally, we proceed by using a simple declaration of personal income, in the words of the hon. member for York South. These are the elements. You may disagree on the amount but the principles advocated earlier this summer and the principles established in this measure are precisely the same.

I would have had greater respect for members of the New Democratic Party if they had said to me: Yes, you are now implementing the principles we advocated last June and you are proceeding in precisely the same way but you are not giving enough. However, they have not taken that attitude. If they had done so they would have been honest. At least they would have been honest in terms of their approach last June and they would have advocated larger amounts. However, they have rejected totally the position they took in June. Now they are opposed to the concept of a guaranteed annual income and are strongly in support of a universal approach unrelated to the income of the recipient. They have abandoned the position taken in June in favour of the 1951 position taken in the house by all parties. This is true conservatism.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre regards the report of the joint committee as binding forever on the conscience of the Canadian people. It is like the law of the Medes and the Persians. It cannot be changed. We do not take this view.

Mr. Knowles: Are you changing it?

Mr. MacEachen: I do not take the view that the principles embodied in a law should never be changed. We are now advocating a new approach.

Mr. Knowles: Did the minister say "new"?

Mr. MacEachen: A new guaranteed income approach which was advocated last June by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway and the leader and deputy leader of the New Democratic Party and which now, in December, is being rejected by every spokesman in that party. I call this conservatism. We are in favour of at least trying a few new things to see whether we can not make better use of the limited resources that are available for social security programs in Canada. We believe that this new approach will make better use of the money, and will put it where it is most required, than would the approach taken by members on the other side of the house.