

*Suggested Pension Payment Corrections*

old age security will provide a monthly benefit of \$215 for each pensioner.

Canada's record in comparison with other western countries should make Canadians feel proud. While the minimum monthly pension payable to every aged person in Canada is \$73, in the United States it is \$55. If an aged person in Canada has no other income he can receive \$109.20 monthly. In the United States, there is no provision for him to receive more than the \$55. In Britain, the minimum monthly pension for a single householder is \$56. In France, the pension is 20 per cent of previous earnings if one retires at age 60, 40 per cent if one retires at age 65 or 60 per cent if one does not retire until age 70. The rate in West Germany is 45 per cent of previous earnings if one has contributed for 30 years.

In Sweden the rate is 60 per cent of previous earnings after 30 years of contributions. This afternoon the minister pointed out the inconsistencies in the motion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). While proposing that the government move in the direction of a guaranteed annual income for all Canadians, the motion urges us to abandon the income test in relation to the guaranteed income supplement. A guaranteed income for all Canadians would be an income test program which covered all the Canadian society. The guaranteed income supplement is a guaranteed income program which covers only that part of the Canadian society which includes people over the age of 66. On January 1 of next year, it will be extended to cover all those over age 65. Are we being urged to abandon this form of program or to extend it?

The medicare program which started on July 1, 1968 has not received maximum acceptance by the provinces, but indications are that eventually the provinces will proceed with the necessary action to complement federal legislation, thereby making possible a nation wide system of prepaid medical care. We believe in medical care.

Mental retardation is regarded as a major national health, social and economic problem. It is considered to be one of the top ranking causes of disability among all age groups. It is responsible for immeasurable and prolonged frustration as well as loss to the retarded individuals' family and a great loss in economic output to society. The government has recognized that mental retardation is of national concern and warrants increased financial support for programs specifically

[Mr. Badanai.]

designed to prevent and alleviate this disability.

The opposition would appear to be attempting to build up a case which, when looked at in the light of day, has no legs on which to stand. I wish to compliment the minister for his exhaustive and comprehensive outline of the state of Canada's welfare program which is second to none in the western world. It seems to me our country is fortunate in having a responsible government which recognizes fact and not fancy in dealing with those in need of assistance. I agree, however, that consideration should be given to an increase for the superannuated civil servants. They are being penalized because of the rising cost of living. For that reason, I support the recommendations of the committee which two years ago brought in an excellent report in support of an increase. I would urge the minister to consider taking action in respect of this group of people at an early date.

• (9:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, first, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for having brought this motion before the house. For 27 years his voice has been heard in this House of Commons, I would suggest to the honour of those in this chamber, asking hon. members to consider the plight of those in our society who are worthy of the consideration of this nation. These are people who are entitled to the assistance which Canada can give them.

It is somewhat disturbing to me to hear the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. Badanai)—one of the nice guys—get up and give the appearance of veracity to what would otherwise be an unlikely story. When the hon. member quoted statistics comparing Canada to other countries, perhaps he should have considered telling the other side of the story. He should have said that Canada is much wealthier than those countries to which he referred, and that we have a disgraceful record in terms of the percentage of our gross national product set aside for welfare programs. Those countries that the hon. member mentioned spend a far greater percentage of their gross national product for social welfare programs than do we.

**Mr. Munro:** That is not true.

**Mr. Saltsman:** It is true, and I refer to Germany, France and Britain, all of which