

Canada Pension Plan

I am also taking up the time of this house, but having listened to the debate this afternoon I trust that Your Honour will be lenient and allow me to discuss some of the things which have been said.

I have on my desk several editorials to which I should like to refer during my speech this evening. As I have said, having witnessed a member of the cabinet stoop to very low tactics, I believe we in the opposition have the right to also use this kind of tactic to point out the inadequacies of this government in its actions to increase social assistance. In view of the unjust accusations which have been made by the Minister of National Revenue and a relatively small number of members sitting to my left today I think one should compare those accusations with the facts, keeping in mind always the bragging words of those members about the increased payments to old age pensioners included in this pension plan, and the relationship of those payments to the cost of living index. I will be through very shortly, Mr. Speaker. What did the former government do? How can you condemn the former government? You are bringing about an increase of 75 cents or maybe \$1.50 a month when the former government brought about increases of \$6 and \$10, with an eventual increase amounting to \$25 a month. I have great respect for the minister, Mr. Speaker. I am not referring to her. I am referring to the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Benson) who attacked the former government and I am simply trying to point out the difference.

This brings up a point I want to raise in my speech and which is referred to in an editorial I wish to include in my speech. I hesitate to read it all but for the moment I will read part of it. It is from the *Ottawa Journal* of August 12 last and reads as follows:

On April 1, 1963, Liberal leader Pearson promised that if his party elected a government it would act within "the 60 days of decision" to establish a contributory pension plan. On August 10, 1964, having been in office since April 22, 1963, the Pearson government produced a white paper on its pension plan.

I referred to that a moment ago and I also complimented the minister on her tenacity in bringing such a measure before the house for the third time. Frankly I think she is to be complimented but, Mr. Speaker, not the government.

One positive statement in the white paper is that the plan will not be effective until January, 1966, at the earliest. Then the collection of contributions will begin. Pension benefits would start a year later but would not reach their full level until 1976. There is also in the white paper a warning to those who wait expectantly that the

rate of contribution in certain categories will be higher than had been proposed earlier.

There is not a word about the hopes on the pension raised and then cast down. There is no mention—

These are not my words.

—of what the pugnacious Miss LaMarsh did in making Ontario co-operation in the plan more difficult because she dragged it into the provincial election last year.

All politicians would naturally do that. These are not my words.

Costs of the plan, on which many questions have been raised, will be examined in the course of the parliamentary committee study the government has promised.

If I may deviate for a moment, Mr. Speaker, there are two points I want to make. One of them I referred to a moment ago and it has to do with the old age pensioners and the Old Age Assistance Act. The minister has referred to the fact that in the bill before us their pensions are tied to the cost of living index, but because of certain interjections, particularly by the Minister of National Revenue who asked "what did the former government do", I want to repeat by way of emphasis what the former government did and what kind of comparison we have.

From reading the bill, news releases and the minister's speech at the resolution stage and from listening to the minister's speech today it is my understanding that if the cost of living rises to a certain point the pensions of these people will be increased by 75 cents a month or a maximum increase of \$1.50 a month. I repeat again by way of emphasis that the former government increased these pensions much more than that, as a matter of fact up to \$25 a month in stages. We only claim credit for part of the last \$10 increase, but for all of the \$19 before that. Compare that with what the six buck boys did prior to that time. These facts should be made known to the house and to the people of Canada so that they can make a comparison. What is \$1.50 a month compared with \$10 a month? That is the real point I want to make. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said this afternoon, these people might well be referred to as the forgotten group so far as the government is concerned. They brag about 75 cents or \$1.50 a month ten years from now when we have already done ten times as much. I hear a member behind me say that we might change the "six buck boys" to the "six bit boys". Another member says "six bit gal", but actually I have great respect for the minister.

I want to refer to previous speakers, particularly the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) who has a lot to say for a few