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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 79th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Old-Age Pensions

REMARKS

OF

HON. GEORGE B. SCHWABE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1946

Mr. SCHWABE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, the subject of old-age pensions is still before us. The method of handling disbursements to our aged and the qualifications which the recipients should possess, can be greatly simplified. I have long maintained that there should be only two qualifications requisite for persons to receive old-age assistance. First, the applicant should offer satisfactory proof that he or she is a citizen of the United States. Second, they must have attained the required age. It would be a very simple matter to ascertain the facts about these two prerequisites. This would do away with all of the snoopers. It would relieve the taxpayers materially. The many thousands of case workers, clerical people, and the like, who are now getting the money that the old people should receive, would be dropped from the pay rolls and the aged would benefit materially by having their allowances increased.

Why should the people who have been in many instances hard working, enterprising, good citizens, who have helped make this country great and who have been the taxpayers of the past generation, be forced to go before unsympathetic, untrained political appendages and puppets of any administration, and be required to answer questions and fill out forms that are so disgusting? This is so embarrassing that many worthy old people will not make application for old-age assistance. They do not want to be classed as paupers. They do not want to have some political snooper call regularly and find out whether or not they have received a Christmas present of $5 from a friend or a son or a daughter. Naturally they want to help make their own living. The way the problem is handled today, in many instances, there is a premium put upon indolence and loafing. They are penalized if they do anything for themselves or if they receive help from a child or a friend. That is certainly not the American ideal. But it does promote New Deal regimentation of the people.

The more I have considered the problem, the more I am convinced that old-age pensions or old-age assistance should be paid entirely out of Federal funds, or entirely out of State funds. The payment should be made directly to the one entitled to receive the assistance. This would eliminate the maladministration now all too prevalent. Simplify the qualifications of the applicant and make the payments out of either Federal funds or State funds directly to the recipient. Take old-age assistance out of politics and away from the politicians, and the stooges and camp followers of the administration would have to find a method of earning an honest livelihood for themselves, instead of preying upon the public and being paid out of funds that should be paid to the aged.

The idea of the States matching the Federal Government in the payment of old-age assistance is not wholesome. There are so many, entirely too many, instances of Federal-State or Federal-local matching of funds. Uncle Sam is broke. He is financially embarrassed. Many of the States and localities are in good financial condition. We must come to the point where the localities can as-

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Mr + Mrs M. W. Ijams

Old Age Assist

Ijams

sume their responsibilities as they did in the early history of this country. We should get away from so much of this matching business. It is conceivable that a readjustment of this program would be more economical by far than the present system and would be eminently more satisfactory to the oldsters.

During the dying days of this session of Congress there has been an amendment passed to the social-security law which is very misleading. In some instances it will result in an increase of the monthly checks to the older people not to exceed $5. In other instances it will not increase their payments. By and large the new law provides for additional payments out of Federal funds to the States. But it is left to the States to determine the distribution, the qualifications, and the allocations of these funds to the older people. It is doubtful if the older people will be materially benefited. In these days of inflation they need additional help and Congress should have been more considerate. But the administration insisted that we do everything before we helped our young patriots and the old people. They were willing for us to spend money for everything else, but these two classes of people were the last to be considered before adjournment of the Seventy-ninth Congress.

May the day soon come that old-age pensions will be taken out of politics and the political camp followers removed from the public pay roll and the vast sums being paid to these snoopers be added to the payments made monthly to the old people.

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Mr Ijams + I agree with you on many points - What we desire is - Make both men + women eligible at age of 60, as it is very hard for most men to get employment at that age in normal times - allow old people to own a little some thing + to earn more than 14.99 per mo. don't kill their ambition and require them to be paupers in order to draw it - + most of all - let this come from Fed. Government + let the states pay their pro-rata share - Let the old people live in any state they wish + can be the happiest - instead of requiring you to be in one state one year + in another five yrs - Simplify it + cut out politics, and humiliation for the aged - Give them [illegible] to live on - as they have built this country

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