

Senior Citizens Demands of Rights

All kinds of men and women, all Nationalities, all colours, friends and foe, rich and poor, are forced to join the same lodge, which I will call the Senior Citizens of Canada - really a very unstable group as to health - kind of here today and, gone tomorrow. The Government says we are too old to work so they put us out to pasture, so to speak, on a pension of \$80.00 per month.

Now, we have worked many, many years when wages were \$1.00 per day, or sometimes \$30.00 per month and board. We had to work ten hours per day, six days a week. In many cases, a couple of hours of chores before breakfast and also after supper. There was no Unemployment Insurance, no Compensation, no Welfare, Relief or Hospitalization. Our wives and mothers also passed the time, about 16 hours a day amusing themselves, rustling wood, carrying water, washing clothes, patching, darning and knitting, also scrubbing wood floors. And don't forget the 2 holer at the end of a well-worn path about 100 yards behind the house, with the T. Eaton catalogue nailed on the wall. That had to be kept clean summer and winter. Also, there was cooking, washing dishes, up with sick children at night and even serving as midwife when needed and, of course, taking part in community work and entertainment. Now we have to face the facts. The children we raised and educated the best way we could have forgotten all about us. They want money, and more money; stage strike after strike; thinking only of themselves. Each time they strike, up go consumer goods. They are paid more in one day than we received in one month and, still are not satisfied. Did anyone ever hear one word the strikers have uttered, making a plea for Mother and Father or Grandparents? Certainly not. We have produced our family and are treated now just as animals and should be disposed of. We have sent letters by the thousands to our Dominion Government pleading for more money and fringe benefits. We did get answers from Right Honourable Benson and Munro, stating that \$30.00 per week was ample for old folk to live on. Prime Minister Trudeau made the statement on radio that if he were re-elected, he would not promise further aid for the \$5 and over. But, we all know the Federal members took a raise from \$6,000.00 per year and up, plus free transportation and a healthy expense account. Now, just who made this wonderful country - Canada. Did Trudeau and his Playboy friends? Or was it the solid hard working men and women? Who squanders our money? Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Sharp take turns giving it to foreign aid - 50 million here and 100 million there. An atomic reactor here - a new colony there. Some outright gifts - some 50 years without interest. They also sink hundreds of millions in ships and planes only to find they are no good. We can only vote for the rich to govern us, as the same rich make sure that one of them is put on the ballot. We have the choice between the underclothes man and Playboys. Consequently, we end with a playboy telling the Eskimo how to build an igloo; lawyers explaining to the farmer how to milk a cow; doctors telling the fishermen how to gut a fish. The oil man how to run a sawmill and Mr. Munro telling the Senior Citizens how to stretch one dollar into ten.

Mr. Trudeau and his buddies think it would be very sinful to allow the old folks of Canada a decent allowance - they wouldn't have the money to squander. They wouldn't get the red carpet rolled out for them in the foreign lands so often. It would unbalance the whole Commonwealth - there wouldn't be enough T-bone steaks to go around. It would simply be too terrible a thing for the old man and woman not to have to worry about paying taxes, insurance, rent, water, telephone, heat, medicine and cablevision and a few clothes along with the tea and bread we are supposed to live on. Now, let's look at some of the sinful things that might happen if the old folks got \$250.00 per month. Grandpa might take Grandma to a picture show - Lord, he might even call a taxi, or, he might jump right off the deep end and take her out for dinner and have a Tom Collins first. He might hire a teenager to mow his lawn, shovel the snow off the walk, or pull a few weeds etc. They might even go on a short trip.

Mr. Trudeau, you will have a rude awakening when you reach 70 - 80 - 90 years old. Your back and legs won't be quite as limber as of today. The ski hill will look long and steep.

Here is a question for every Senior Citizen in Canada to answer to themselves.

Did you at any time in your life suffer a defeat, a serious setback? Did your crop ever dry out, freeze out or hail out? Did your house ever burn down, losing all? Did your sawmill burn down, your boat capsize, or did you lose your nets? Did your mine cave in, or disaster hit you in your line of business? If this ever happened to



you, what did you do? Did you simply quit trying or did you get up and try again? Just because we are over 65 years of age, do we have to be told by a group of dictators what our standard of living is? These men were put in office to run a rich country such as Canada, and to treat all nationalities, young and old alike and, to give every person their just dues. Now we have the same heart that we started with although it doesn't beat as strong and the air we breathe isn't as pure, but we don't have to lay down and die. We have to make Mr. Trudeau and Company realize that the old people of Canada are very much alive and, that we demand a little larger piece of the pie that we made. Now every tradesman in Canada from Doctors, School Teachers, Garbage men, Airmen, you say it and they have been on strike. They all want more money, fringe benefits, more pensions and, do they get it? Of course they do. Do they ever think about hurting thousands of innocent people? They don't give this a thought as long as they get more money, holidays, etc.

There is a way for the old folks to hit back, and one way only. This is the only thing the Government recognizes. That is Strike Action. How can old broken down men and women strike? They have no money to travel or advertise. This is the way. We can run a picket line around every Government works yard. Public works and Municipal. We will stop work on every highway and every street in Canada. Tie everything up but the garbage trucks. The men who work out of these yards are Union men, also mostly local. I don't think they will run us down or cross the picket line. Now, we the Senior Citizens of Canada from Vancouver Island to Prince Edward Island, from the U.S.A. border to the Arctic Ocean - Let us band together - Indians and Eskimos and Whites. We ask the whole-hearted support from all Youth Organizations and, especially the Student Councils who are so active and are so sympathetic toward their grandparents. They will need your help on the picket line. May we ask all citizens to give us their whole-hearted support: To the people who have made your living what it is today. We are tired of begging, tired of skimping and doing without.

We demand that:

- Each and every Senior Citizen residing in Canada for a period of 5 years are entitled to a warm home, or room, enough money to provide adequate food and clothing, a telephone and a T.V. if desirable.
- That each and every one of us have the same opportunity to enter a rest home, nursing home, Senior Citizen housing project, or hospital @ \$1.00 per day - whether he be the Doctor's Uncle or the Mayor's Mother-in-law, or any of the nationalities we have in Canada, supervised by Provincial appointed board.
- That each and every Senior Citizen shall have a medical card entitling them to free dentures - hearing aids - eye glasses and prescription drugs, also Medical Doctors, Chiropractor and Physiotherapy.
- That each and every one shall be exempt from school tax, whether on home or trailer.
- We demand an untaxable income of \$250.00 per month for every Senior Citizen who has resided in Canada for at least 5 years.

It is quite true that a very few don't need a pension raise. There are also a few who will still hoard their nickels, but the most of us, if we know that we will receive \$250.00 pension, plus free medical card, we will spend it. This will help the economy of the country immensely.

As we are the poorest organization in Canada we can't afford TV or Radio coverage. We want this letter to reach every Senior Citizen in Canada. How? Go back to the chain letter system. As soon as you receive or read this letter don't hesitate, have it typed or photocopied and send it to at least 3 friends or relatives in another province. This puts a big load on many shoulders and will reach each community in Canada. On Monday, February 28th, 1972, we sent Prime Minister Trudeau, a registered letter stating our demands with a strike date of May 1, 1972. Also follow this up with a letter each Monday with a list of the different groups supporting this movement. Phone or write your support to Box 2033, Merritt, B.C. or phone 378-2969. When writing for information, please enclose postage. Our local papers are printing this letter and will keep abreast of developments and show new members each week.

These papers are the Merrittonian, The Merritt Herald and the Chase Shuswap Weekly, published each week. Let us see how many thousands of names they will print.

We are sending 1,000 letters across Canada. Small donations gratefully received.

Geo. E. Turner, President
R. S. Murray, Vice President