

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

I have had experience in trying to establish the age of pensioners. In many instances pensioners cannot act for themselves but must obtain the services of their minister, the township clerk, their member of parliament, their member of the legislature, neighbours or anybody who can help them. Should it be necessary to ask for other people's services to fill out forms for this supplement? Remember, Mr. Speaker, that many people living in rural areas have had no experience with income tax. They have never filled out an income tax form in their lives and it is ridiculous to ask them at 69 years of age to start filling out forms they have never been familiar with. This, I think, will cause hardship for many.

I know the government will be faced with a continuing barrage from the old age pensioners and from the people interested in this problem in the welfare and social fields—yes, and in political fields—to remove the means test after the bill is passed. The Social Credit group, though they are disturbed by some aspects of the bill will vote for it.

As an opposition member interested in the old age pensioners I shall have to vote for this legislation even if it has a needs test in it. The need for old age pensioners in my area to receive an increase is so desperate that we shall have to support this measure. It is also safe to say that if Liberal members of parliament are not dishonest with themselves they will immediately begin a campaign to remove this type of test. That campaign, I believe, will begin immediately the legislation is passed. I should be very surprised if at the next election all the political parties do not come out with the idea of making the \$30 part of the old age security plan.

I shall also have a few words to say about the relationship this plan ought to have to supplements paid by provincial governments and to the Canada Pension Plan. For that reason I call it eleven o'clock.

Mr. Churchill: What about tomorrow?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. What is the sense of the house regarding the adjournment questions? Does the house wish to proceed?

Mr. Churchill: It is too hard on the staff. As we have gone to eleven o'clock we should show consideration for the staff of the house and discontinue. We should postpone the adjournment debate until some other day.

Mr. Prittie: All those concerned this evening are here. We shall not take very long.

[Mr. Peters.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Churchill: May I ask what the business will be for tomorrow?

Mr. MacEachen: We propose to debate this item tomorrow, and when it is completed we shall take the railway bill.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT—REAPPOINTMENT OF EXPERIENCED RETURNING OFFICERS

Mr. R. W. Prittie (Burnaby-Richmond): Mr. Speaker, on December 2, at page 10668 of *Hansard*, I asked the following question:

—I have a question for the Secretary of State which she might take as notice and answer on Monday. Will the minister inform the house why competent returning officers with years of experience are not being reappointed for the new constituencies? New appointments are being made daily and these experienced people are being dropped.

● (11:00 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker said that was a proper topic for the adjournment proceedings. The custom for a long time in Canada since confederation has been for the party in power to appoint returning officers in the various constituencies across the country from, of course, among its own supporters. This is not the issue I am bringing up tonight though it is an important issue and there might be some other way of making the appointments. But that is not the subject I wish to deal with. I want to complain about the fact that returning officers with many years of experience are being replaced. Not all of them are being replaced but the majority are and, of course, the old practice of appointing friends of the government in power is being followed.

When a returning officer is appointed he retains his appointment except for one of several reasons which are listed in the Canada Elections Act, I am quoting from section 8 (3):

The Governor in Council may remove from office, as for cause, any returning officer who

- (a) has attained the age of sixty-five years;
- (b) ceases to reside in his electoral district;
- (c) is incapable, by reason of illness, physical or mental infirmity or otherwise, of satisfactorily performing his duties under this Act;
- (d) has failed to discharge competently his duties, or any thereof, under this Act; or
- (e) has at any time after his appointment been guilty of politically partisan conduct, whether or not in the course of performance of his duties under this Act.