

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970

deleting therefrom all of clause 21 except lines 24 to 32, both inclusive, on page 19, and lines 30 to 39, both inclusive, on page 20.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the light of the instructions from the Chair earlier today I understand that at this point comments are in order on motion No. 9, which you have just read, and also on motion No. 10, which is in the name of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). In view of the fact that we have had a pretty wide-ranging debate, I suspect we would all be satisfied if the debate at this time could be a bit shorter. Therefore my remarks at this point will be brief.

Perhaps I might deal with the two motions in reverse order and say that if motion No. 9 is defeated—in other words, if we are going to keep clause 21 in the bill—we shall be pleased to support the amendment moved by the President of the Privy Council, particularly because of the slight improvement it makes with regard to the pensions available to the orphans of Members of Parliament who die having been predeceased by their wives.

Motion No. 9, Mr. Speaker, is perhaps the most all-embracing of the whole group of 15 proposed amendments, but that does not mean that the discussion has to be extended. It deals with clause 21 of the bill which, as hon. members realize, covers about 14 or 15 pages. It is the clause in which are spelled out most of the terms of the new provisions for pensions for Members of Parliament. My amendment would strike out everything in those 14 or 15 pages except the part that would require us to pay one-half of one per cent into the fund for supplemental benefits, it being understood that in an earlier part of the bill it has already been provided that Members of Parliament are entitled to the escalation that is paid out of that fund. That, then, is the purpose of this amendment. As a matter of fact, it gets to the heart of what we in this party have been talking about all day, namely, that the portion of this bill dealing with Members of Parliament should do only what the bill as a whole is doing for all of those others who are covered by it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I did not take exception to the words that the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean) put in my mouth a moment ago because he was quite fair. At least, he did not do violence to what I said, but there was a slight difference which I think I am entitled to point out. He said that in light of what I said at an earlier point it appeared that I did not want to do anything

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

for Members of Parliament at any time unless we were doing precisely the same thing for all others with regard to their pension plans. That is not what I said.

I recognize that there have to be some differences among the various pension plans, but what I objected to, what I still object to, and what most of my colleagues object to is the fact that in this bill when we are doing something with respect to pensions for all of us, all of us whose pensions come out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, we have picked ourselves out to do something extra for ourselves, namely, to revamp our pension plan and recast it altogether.

The President of the Privy Council and others have said that this is a logical thing to do, that we are opening up the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, so why not do this now? By the same token, Mr. Speaker, this bill opens up the Public Service Superannuation Act, and there are things that need to be done to that act. So let us do them now. For example, a moment ago I said I had no objection to the proposal made by the President of the Privy Council in motion No. 10. One of the things it relates to is the pensions paid to widows, although his motion is imposing a slight restriction on their love life after they become widows. But may I point out that what we are doing with this combination is looking to the Public Service Superannuation Act, and we see in that act that the pensions available for the orphaned children of a deceased public service pensioner can go up to 80 per cent, and so we are saying, let us do the same thing for Members of Parliament.

That is a reasonable argument. But, Mr. Speaker, the civil servants then come along to us and say, "Why is it you take for yourselves a better point which you find in our act, but you won't do the reverse? You won't give us something for our act that in your act is better." I refer in particular to the provision for widows. One of the things civil servants are most anxious about is to have their plan amended so that widows will get at least a 60 per cent pension, comparable with the pension we pay under this plan to our widows.

Mr. Francis: Would the hon. member permit a question? Does he not agree that the public service superannuation plan payments actually made to widows are substantially in excess of payments that would be made, even under these amendments, to the widows of Members of Parliament, and that the specious