

Members' Retiring Allowances

and support the other members of our families, but when death occurs the pension stops and there is nothing left.

I must say that I do not agree with the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway. He said that the widow of a member of parliament was no more entitled to a pension than the widow of a farmer or a fisherman. Now, the only type of pension for a widow that I have heard described here is one for which members of parliament would pay themselves.

There was a proposal made by the hon. member for Kamloops. He suggested that we should have the option of electing to take a smaller pension ourselves, thereby increasing the pension for the widow. No one is suggesting, certainly I am not suggesting, that the widows of farmers and fishermen are not entitled to pensions. This is something which it is within our power to plan to do for the widows of members of parliament. The farmers and fishermen have the same privilege of looking after their wives or dependents. I would support them in every move they wanted to make in that regard. However, I do not think the suggestion made by the hon. member was particularly sound.

I do not like this idea of the old age pension being deducted from the pensions of members of parliament. I think there is a rather unfortunate inference there.

Mr. Martin: It is not correct. Old age security is a non-means-test pension.

Mrs. Shipley: Is it to be deducted?

An hon. Member: No.

Mrs. Shipley: I do not understand it. I am sorry I opened up that subject. I believe that is all I have to say. I do hope that, as suggested by the Acting Prime Minister, a committee of this house will be formed to consider something for the widows of members of parliament. I can only say that I hope I might be asked to serve on that committee, because I would have nothing to gain from it and I should like to see some consideration given to the widows of members.

Mr. Ferguson: When I speak in the House of Commons I am here to speak for the people of Canada. When I spoke on this subject today I was not whining on my own behalf. I was not whining on behalf of my wife. I was here discussing a matter which concerns the people of Canada. I do not like the implication by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway. I have never needed any contribution from the House of Commons in order to weigh 210 pounds. I have eaten three meals a day and so has my wife, even

before we saw the House of Commons. We shall continue to do so. We do not need the House of Commons.

When I spoke, I spoke for future generations in Canada. We are being asked to enact a change in a law which has been on the statute books for only a short time. I think it is most unfair for another member to cast aspersions on me by saying he did not like people whining about their own case in the House of Commons. No person has ever heard me whining on behalf of myself or my family.

Mr. MacInnis: I did not say the hon. member was whining. I did not say any hon. member in this house was whining.

The Chairman: Perhaps I have been a little too indulgent in allowing the debate to proceed on the question of extending the provisions of this bill to the widows of members; that is perhaps beyond the scope of these amendments. I believe we might limit our discussion more particularly to the clause before us.

Mr. Cardiff: I do not intend to take up very much of the time of the committee. After considering the answer given to the hon. member for Fort William, perhaps there is one place a change should be made in the bill, because it does not make sense. The provision in the original bill stated a member had to win three elections and sit through 17 sessions of parliament to qualify for a pension. Those of us who have been here for 14 years qualified, but now one may not qualify for a full pension by winning three elections. You would have to win four, and sometimes perhaps five.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): That is to qualify for the maximum pension. You are able to qualify for a pension after two parliaments plus, but you only qualify in relation to the amount you have contributed to the fund over that period. It will take 17 sessions of parliament to qualify for the full amount. By that time you will have paid in \$4,000 and will be entitled to receive \$3,000 a year.

Mr. Cardiff: I understand that, but we had two sessions of parliament within one year on two different occasions, which meant that many of the older men in the house became eligible for a full pension.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): That is right.

Mr. Cardiff: Those who will be coming into the house now cannot qualify for this full pension even in three parliaments. They would have to go on perhaps to four parliaments.