

*Old Age Security Act*

amendment) from the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

**Mr. Speaker:** My understanding is that there is agreement among hon. members that we might proceed at this time with the report stage of Bill C-207 and in particular, perhaps, consider motions Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 which are before the Chair and of which notice has been given.

I think I owe it to hon. members to indicate that in my view these four amendments are clearly out of order. In each case they involve a charge on the treasury. Unless hon. members wish to consider amendments which are not in order, I do not see how I can allow these motions to be put. I would be pleased to receive advice from hon. members. If hon. members want to give their opinions, I will consider them. The first one is as follows.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Romuald Rodrigue (Beauce)** moved:

That Bill C-207, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be amended by inserting a comma after the word "who" in Clause 2 at line 23, page 1 and adding the following:

"has reached age 60."

This is obviously, I think, a broad amendment, since it would force the Crown to incur additional expenditures. This type of motion, as everyone knows, requires the recommendation of His Excellency. If hon. members can convince me that my interpretation of this amendment is erroneous, I shall be happy to put it to the House, but it seems clear to me that the amendment is not in order.

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, we are somewhat amazed at the procedure used tonight in the absence of the sponsors of these amendments.

At all events, I share the views of the Chair as to the acceptability of the first amendment, which in the main tends to call the government's attention on the fact that it would be desirable to introduce an adjustment with respect to the age of eligibility to old age security pension.

In these circumstances, I perfectly agree that the ruling which the Chair has just given is in strict compliance with the Standing Orders and we accept it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his eloquent words and his generosity in accepting the proposal of the Chair. What troubles me slightly is that the reservation I have just made with regard to motion No. 1 also applies to motions Nos. 2, 3 and 4; I wonder if the hon. member will be as enthusiastic in recognizing, in agreement with the Chair, that all those motions would entail additional expenditures on the part of the Crown. The hon. member may want to make certain remarks that would help the Chair express an opinion on motion No. 2 which reads as follows:

—That Bill C-207, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be amended by deleting the word "who" in Clause 2 at line 23, page 1 and substituting therefor the following:

"even if his age is lower than the provisions of the present Act if the spouse receives a monthly pension by virtue of the said Act."

The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) seems willing to express his views concerning the motion. Of

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

course, this is merely concerning the procedural acceptability of this motion.

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have listened with great interest to your comments, the importance of which cannot be questioned, on motion No. 2 submitted by the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise).

Mr. Speaker, I agree with you that this is expenditure. Indeed, the motion reads as follows:

"even if his age is lower than the provisions of the present Act if the spouse receives a monthly pension by virtue of the said Act."—*Mr. Laprise.*

I agree that, literally, Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of expenditure, and an exclusive prerogative of the government.

However, I maintain that a basic principle is involved, the very principle of the bill. The bill provides that an old age security pension will be paid to persons from age 65. We want to tell the government that we hope that it will adopt this view that, when a person is entitled to the old age pension under the regulations and the old age security act, his or her spouse, whatever that person's age, whatever that person's income be also entitled to the pension.

It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that you are right. It is a question of money, since it is a question of giving more money to these people who are not the same age as their spouse. But it remains that in our view that is a very secondary aspect, since it is not the question of money that is important but the question of principle.

For instance someone who has reached age 65, who gets the old age security pension while the spouse, 52 or 55 years old, is not receiving it cannot make both ends meet and this compels us to fight bitterly against the actual principle of the bill.

We intend to fight against this principle in order that the couple in need, when one spouse only receives the pension, may be able to draw it, whatever might be the spouse's age.

We hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will consider the spirit rather than the letter so that elderly people in Canada, even if they are married, are not penalized.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Lotbinière is quite original in bringing in such an argument. He suggests that the Chair should consider only the principle, that is the motion's purpose, which is to provide advantages to a class of the population which he considers underprivileged. All hon. members will, I am sure, agree with the hon. member for Lotbinière and his colleague as to the principle. Unfortunately the Chair must sometimes go beyond principles and abide by the Standing Order of the House, which clearly indicates, as the hon. member for Lotbinière agrees, and recognized when presenting his argument, that the Speaker must abide by the Standing Orders and by custom and tradition of our parliamentary institutions. I suggest that it clearly is not possible for an hon. member to present a bill or an amendment involving disbursements, unless such bill or amendment be accompanied by a recommendation of the Crown.

In this case, unless the hon. member can apprise me of a recommendation from His Excellency, I must rule that the