

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I think the government would have to reserve the right to obtain second reading before the actuarial report is prepared. Indeed if a private member proposed a bill to amend the Canada pension plan it would take the actuary that amount of time between the introduction of the bill and second reading to prepare such a report.

Mr. Olson: May I point out that the section says the chief actuary shall, whenever any bill is introduced in or presented to the House of Commons to introduce this kind of measure, prepare this report. I suggest we will have to amend this act to take care of what the minister has suggested.

Mr. Benson: I think if it were amended with the effect of changing the contributions or benefits, it would be improper. It would certainly be improper for a private member to introduce such a bill. However, the question raised by my hon. friend is one which could very well be considered by the special committee when it considers the bill in detail.

Mr. D. R. Gundlock (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, I had prepared a speech this afternoon which I felt was short and to the point, and of interest to the members of this house and to the public generally. However, after listening to the debate this afternoon, and particularly to the statement of the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Benson) I feel that some rebuttal to various suggestions should come from this side of this chamber.

I listened with great interest to the speech made by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Benson), and for several reasons. I listened with interest because today is the first time I have heard him make a speech in this house, and because I have a great deal of respect for him. That hon. minister referred to the white paper, and I should also like to refer to that white paper in a later part of my speech. He also referred to the inaction of the previous government. Since listening to him I have decided that several facts should be brought to the attention of hon. members and the general public.

This parliament can take a great deal of pride in some of the actions which were taken by the previous government, and I intend to refer later to those actions in detail. Since 1957 old age pensions have been increased to the extent of some \$29 per month. Admittedly \$19 of that increase took place under the previous government, and one must remember that it took place during a period of six years.

[Mr. Olson.]

There has been a great deal said about relating old age assistance to the cost of living index. The Minister of National Health and Welfare during her remarks this afternoon dwelt on the provisions of the Canada pension plan as they relate to adjustments to the cost of living index. At the resolution stage of this legislation the minister announced that benefits to old age pensioners would be related to the cost of living index. She should be commended for her tenacity in bringing this bill before the house, because this is the third time we have commenced our consideration of a bill to establish a Canada pension plan. I commend the minister individually and not the government as a whole. She has shown unusual and sincere devotion to the work of her department, and I give her full credit in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will forgive me for straying for the moment from the bill now being considered, but having listened to one member of the government talk about the inaction of the former government, I feel some rebuttal is warranted.

As I understand the figures that have been given in relation to the increased benefits to old age pensioners, as a result of the adoption of this bill that increase will be between 75 cents and \$1.50 per month. That is a shameful increase in relation to the \$19 increase which took place during the six year period when the former government was in office. Originally I had not intended to refer to the six buck boys, but having listened to the Minister of National Revenue stoop to such low tactics as he did, I think the actions of this government to increase payments under the Old Age Assistance Act should be compared to actions taken by the previous Conservative government in this regard.

The members of the official opposition have been accused on many occasions of holding up the business of the house by filibustering.

Mr. Byrne: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gundlock: Mr. Speaker, I heard someone say "hear, hear". Perhaps that hon. member would stand in his place and be recognized.

Mr. Pascoe: It was the hon. member for Kootenay East.

Mr. Gundlock: We have been accused of filibustering and holding up the business of this parliament, but what have hon. members opposite done? They have been guilty of taking up the time of this house by making interjections of that kind. Perhaps by straying from the subject now under consideration