

Now, for this session, this is our suggestion. We are dead set on it, and this is why I am coming back with an amendment.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Caouette):

That Bill C-147, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act, be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs to consider the lowering of the age for the Old Age Pension from 65 to 60 and the automatic acceptance of the spouse for a pension as soon as one of the couple reaches age 60.

Mr. Speaker, through this amendment, I want everybody to know that we are here to represent the wishes and interests of the people. This is the only reason why we are members of this House and we do not have to muddle up with archaic regulations. If it is not possible to move amendments directly before the House, we would like that this bill be again referred to the committee so that our proposals can be examined once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, other members must realize as well as we do that all Canadians want this done. For example, in the course of the election campaign, we heard the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) tell everybody in Quebec that he was in favour of granting old age pensions to those aged 60 and we wonder why the Progressive Conservative Party does not side with us now. We had followers on this point at the time of the election campaign, but it seems we are now left alone.

We know quite well that the New Democratic Party had this item on its electoral plank. At least they have always shown that they would not be opposed to this. We even heard ministers discuss this matter during the election campaign. Why? In the end, every one was talking about the possibility of granting old age pension at age 60. It is merely because everybody wants it that way. Therefore, if everybody is in favour of it for very exact and serious motives, why is it that we are not fulfilling this desire expressed by all Canadians?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order. I have examined the amendment proposed by the hon. member. I can hardly accept it in its present form, but in order to allow hon. members who would want to make comments to enlighten the Chair, I will read the amendment:

That Bill C-147 be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs to consider the lowering of the age for the Old Age Pension from 65 to 60 and the automatic acceptance of the spouse for a pension as soon as one of the couple reaches age 60.

The hon. member for Lotbinière.

**Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak for too long, because of the importance of this bill and of this amendment, in order that the House may discuss them.

I should like to summarize my argument concerning the admissibility of the amendment moved by my colleague the hon. member for Champlain.

Mr. Speaker, may I remind the House that in the standing committee on health, welfare and social affairs, the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte), the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise) and myself have keenly fought in order to rouse the members of the committee to the neces-

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sity of giving their agreement to the extension of the committee's terms of reference, and of studying the possibility of lowering the eligibility age to the old age security pension. And the committee has unanimously adopted a resolution—if I am not mistaken—for a more thorough study of the question, and this not merely on consideration of the votes, but also at any time.

Consequently, I consider that if we do consider the amendment word by word, we might be told that it is not receivable, because the terms of reference it assigns to the committee are too specific, and because in the debate on third reading what the committee has to do cannot be specified.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to respectfully point out to you that this Standing Order is absolutely ridiculous, because this would mean that in the debate on third reading, the House could refer legislation to the committee and assign to it very specific terms of reference.

For the amendment to be receivable, if the letter of the rules is to be adhered to, the bill had, for instance, to be referred to the committee for subsequent debate period. Then, possibly, the amendment could be receivable. But, under these circumstances, what would be the terms of reference of the committee? That is the important thing to know: the committee is prepared, is anxious to study the possibility of lowering to 60 the age of eligibility for the old age security pension thanks to the alertness of Creditistes and we are anxious that the House study this same point. This is why I maintain that, as we are studying Bill C-147, which mentions a basic amount, it would be only normal that this amendment be studied by the House.

Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments we presented read in part as follows:

... the lowering of the age for the Old Age Pension from 65 to 60 and the automatic acceptance of the spouse for pension as soon as one of the couple reaches age 60.

This is exactly what the House wants the committee to adopt. This is what the House would like to have recommended by the committee, as it is only studying Bill C-147, which, in reality, only means crumbs for the elderly.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I maintain, with all due respect, that this amendment is receivable.

• (2050)

[*English*]

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a brief comment on the admissibility of this amendment. There are two arguments against it. First, I think it seeks to amend the Old Age Security Act and tries to do something that is not in the bill before us. Therefore it must fail on that ground. The second ground, specifically, is that this amendment is essentially the same as the notice of motion pursuant to Standing Order 75(5) in the name of the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), that is, it seeks to go beyond the royal recommendation. Therefore it must fail on that ground as well.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my hon. friends of the Social Credit party for the vigour with which they are pressing two or three points about which I feel very strongly and concerning which I think this House should take action, namely,