

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Honourable senators, the leader opposite (Hon. Mr. Haig) was good enough to speak to me about this matter. I have no objection to the bill being considered in committee of the whole, and to facilitate matters I have taken the precaution of having in attendance officials of the department so that the honourable senator from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin) or any other honourable member may question them. It should be understood that when the house goes into committee of the whole it need consider only those sections which the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck) wishes to be considered.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: I would concur in that suggestion.

The Hon. the SPEAKER: Honourable senators, the motion before the house is for third reading of the bill. Is it the wish of honourable senators that the motion be withdrawn.

The motion for third reading was withdrawn.

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE

On motion of Hon. Mr. Robertson the Senate went into committee on the bill.

Hon. Mr. SINCLAIR in the Chair.

On section 1—Definitions:

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: I move:

That subsection 4 of section 1 be amended by striking out, in paragraph (jj) the word "sixty" and substituting the words "sixty-five".

The paragraph would then read:

(jj) "retirement age" means sixty-five years of age.

I suppose there is no need of repeating what was said in the debate of yesterday. I more or less agree that all these amendments hang on the first one, and that if you do not agree to change this paragraph by striking out the word "sixty" and substituting "sixty-five" you will be opposed to similar changes all the way through. I shall make an added comment, but it will be very short.

When I was speaking yesterday, the classic illustration with regard to this matter did not pass through my mind, as it did a little later on. The outstanding case of this kind in English literature is that of Charles Lamb who wrote the "Tales of Shakespeare". Lamb was an official of the India office where he was given a job to support him while he wrote his stories and essays, because in those days litterateurs were esteemed more highly than they are nowadays. He was a great letter writer, and he wrote all over England complaining of being chained to a desk, the slave of the India office, while his heart was breaking.

Finally he was superannuated, and he addressed letters to friends all over England indicating his happiness at having escaped at last from slavery. This mood lasted about three weeks, when he began another series of letters, the burden of which was that he was again the most miserable man in all England, because he had nothing to do. Men who, though advancing in years, are not old men should not give up their work and retire. What Charles Lamb needed was a holiday, not to abandon his work, his habits of regularity, and the necessity of keeping time by the clock. That lesson applies in ample measure in the present case. Before leaving it, I cannot resist the temptation of repeating a little witticism of Charles Lamb while he was in government employment. At one time somebody complained or called him to task for getting down so late in the morning: he answered, "Yes, but see how early I leave in the afternoon".

Gentlemen, I am opposed to this business of lowering the age of retirement, and I offer the amendment for your favourable consideration.

Hon. Mr. NICOL: Did I understand the honourable senator from Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck) to say yesterday that retirement could be applied for at the age of sixty but could not be imposed. Is not that the law now?

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: That is the law. As I understand it, retirement can be given at almost any time if the circumstances warrant it.

Hon. Mr. NICOL: At sixty-five?

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: At sixty-five, yes; but compulsory retirement does not take place now until the age of 70. It is the lowering of the age limit from 65 to 60 to which I strongly object. Under the clause now before us, "retirement age" means sixty years of age, and I urge that we strike out "sixty" and substitute "sixty-five". If this amendment is carried, when an employee reaches 65 he may retire on full pension; but under the bill as drafted he may leave at sixty and go fishing, or engage in business of some kind to serve his own interests.

Hon. Mr. NICOL: Yes, if he asks to be retired.

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: That is so, but why should we give him that right? Why should we change the rule we have followed in the past, and allow a man who is in the very prime of life, with all his faculties, his health and the experience he has gathered in the public service, to leave it on full pension?