

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): This item has to do only with departmental administration of the Department of Finance; it is the peace-time administration.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Was the Bretton Woods conference under the direction of the Department of Finance?

Mr. ILSLEY: No.

Mr. BLACKMORE: If it was not, why was it not? Will the Chairman tell me under what department it was.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): What we have here is the peace-time administration, and I submit that the hon. member's problem does not come under that.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am very much concerned about this thing and I think I know what I am talking about.

Mr. MITCHELL: My hon. friend asked for this report the other day, and I have a vivid recollection of the Prime Minister tabling a copy of the Bretton Woods proceedings and saying that as soon as possible they would be printed in English and French for distribution.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am asking a simple question.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): The point the hon. member is raising has nothing to do with the peace-time administration of the Department of Finance; it is in connection with post-war procedure.

Mr. BLACKMORE: If it has to do with post-war, it has to do with peace.

Mr. ILSLEY: It is not really under the Department of Finance. The hon. gentleman wants to know what is to be done with this report.

Mr. BLACKMORE: To know where we are at; that is all.

Mr. ILSLEY: These are draft agreements, one relating to an international monetary plan and the other to an international reconstruction bank. They do not carry any commitment on the part of the government. They were drawn up for submission to governments for rejection or ratification. Before agreements are ratified by the Canadian parliament, a full opportunity is given for discussion. I think we had better drop this discussion for to-night. I am not in a position to discuss it any more than the hon. gentleman is.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am well satisfied with that answer. All I want to know is where Canada stands.

Item agreed to.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

52. Old age pensions, including pensions to the blind, administration, \$43,280.

Mr. KNOWLES: It seems to be getting in the nature of a tradition, Mr. Chairman, that this item should be called very late in the session. Two years ago it was the last afternoon, and last year it was nine o'clock of the last evening, and now it is a quarter to eleven o'clock.

Mr. ILSLEY: Let me say this, that last year and this year there was full opportunity earlier in the session for a full discussion of this subject.

Mr. KNOWLES: The very fact that we did have a partial discussion of this subject on June 2 and June 5 when the war appropriation estimate relating to old age pensions was before us is, to my mind, an additional reason why a reasonable opportunity should have been afforded for further discussion of this matter. One reason why I make that point is that on that occasion hon. members from all sides of the house drew to the attention of the minister a good many matters relating to the administration of the Old Age Pension Act, which is the item now before us, and we dared to hope that by raising these matters at that time there might be some consideration of our points and some further adjustment made before we reached this main item. As a matter of fact, on June 5, as recorded at page 3542 of *Hansard*, the Minister of Finance said, and we appreciated it, that he would have the officials of the old age pension branch comb through the debate of those two days to see what could be done with a number of suggestions that were made at that time. I hope that the minister will indicate to-night whether anything has come out of the study of that debate.

Now that we are on this item, it seems to me that the committee should realize, even though it may hold up the proceedings in the other place for a few minutes, that this matter is of deep concern to very many people in this country. When on the 13th of March of this year I endeavoured to move an amendment to the motion to go into supply in order that we might discuss the matter at that time, I suggested that the time had come to raise the amount of the pension to at least \$40 a month and to lower the eligible age to sixty. The motion that I then made was ruled out of order, so that there was no discussion of it in the house. But a few days later Canada's outstanding Liberal newspaper, which is published in the city from which I come, criticized me for being terribly irresponsible because I was making a suggestion that would involve an increased expenditure of \$155,000,000 a year,