

The hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) stated before the committee, and I quote:

[English]

It is my disposition and suggestion that we proceed to pass the bill.

[Translation]

He indicated that he had some reservations, but he also said, and I quote:

[English]

So far as I am concerned, if there is a general disposition to move this bill forward it would be a useful suggestion. Despite the literal interpretation of the word "parliament," there are times when, perhaps, we serve the over-all constituency best by expediting legislation; although it is not first-class, it is the best we have at the present time. Some day we hope to have something better. So far as I am concerned, I suggest that we are prepared to vote for it.

His party considered the legislation, discussed it in committee and supported it in committee. The same thing applies to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who spoke on behalf of his party. He declared in committee:

I want the report to go back to the House as soon as possible.

Then we had the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), representing the Social Credit party, saying, as reported at page 1:37 of the committee proceedings:

We want the report to be submitted to the House as soon as possible to meet the wish expressed by the hon. minister.

[Translation]

What was said then? We heard the views of the representatives of the other three parties expressed here in the house. They all stated: We would rather have a better, more generous bill, but for the time being this is the best we can get. Let us proceed as quickly as possible, let us pass the bill so that senior citizens may obtain their pension increases as soon as possible.

What has happened in the interval? Several amendments were moved by the Social Credit Party and were all ruled out of order.

What were the remarks? We came back to the House, for third reading and resumed the game that had been played in committee. The same kind of amendments were introduced, and I would even say amendments still more irresponsible than those which were put forward in committee. These amendments, Mr. Speaker, have all been negatived for the same obvious reasons.

In desperation, it would seem—according to what the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) said—that the Social Credit Party of Canada found a non official spokesman to introduce in this House an amendment which reads as follows:

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 to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs in order that the minister responsible may appear again before the said committee for the purpose of amending the bill in such a way that it may better meet the needs of the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, what was done in committee when the bill was introduced? These matters have been considered and discussions have taken place in this regard. What will the committee be able to do if the bill is referred to it?

Old Age Security Act

I have appeared as witness before the committee. At present, the estimates of the department are being considered. I shall appear and I made a commitment before all hon. members and all members of the committee to appear again before the committee to discuss lowering the eligibility age and the increase in pensions. All this has been considered by the committee and we have reached an agreement which is the record of the committee and under which I will appear and we will spend some time to review and discuss the whole matter.

At this stage, all that can only delay the passage of this bill. If the passage of this legislation is put off and results in withholding payment of pensions to elder people, I hope that the country will know who is responsible for this delay: the Creditistes, the Social Credit Party of Canada and in particular the hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

• (1630)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise) on a point of order.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I did not record the dates, but I know that the committee's report was submitted to the House and that the government waited for a week before tabling it.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, that seems to the Chair to be more a point which one could argue or debate rather than a point of order. I think the Chair is in the position more and more each day of having to ask that when hon. members have a point to make because they disagree with another hon. member, instead of seizing the eye of the Chair on a point of order they should ask to be recognized in their turn and then make their argument. The Chair commends this procedure to the House if we are to have orderly debate. The hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde).

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: I do not think I shall waste my time, Mr. Speaker, answering the hon. member's point of order. I will simply point out that we are examining a bill, that time is flying by and that an amendment has been introduced which is not only demagogic but, even worse, futile. Nothing will be achieved through this amendment.

As to the hon. member who introduced this amendment, where was he when this bill was considered in committee? He did not show up in committee; we examined this bill on Tuesday, March 13, 1973. The hon. member for Joliette did not attend the committee meetings. And what is he asking for now? He is asking that the minister return before the committee, while he would perhaps be there himself. We hope he would! In any case, one thing is certain: he did not find this bill important enough at that time to take the trouble to go to the committee.

The hon. member claims that he was in the House when the bill was examined by the committee. If I remember