

POINT OF ORDER

MR. KNOWLES (WINNIPEG NORTH CENTRE)—SENATE DELAY IN DEALING WITH BILL C-5

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today this House unanimously agreed to the passing of the third reading of Bill C-5 without debate. I know that this involved restraint on the part of some of us on this side of the House, but we felt that the circumstances were such that the bill should be passed as quickly as possible. The fact is that more than 200 times a month the situation arises where a spouse in the 60 to 65 year range loses the older spouse and loses the allowance. The extension of that allowance is—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) get to his point of order?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I will be glad to do so. The reasons for my concern are apparent from what I have said. This bill was passed and sent to the other place this afternoon. However, my understanding is that although in the other place the bill was given first reading, Their Honours refused to proceed with it on second reading today. The result is that every day's delay means that seven more widows do not get—

● (1652)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on my point of order I am asking if the government House leader will have consultation with Their Honours in the Senate to see if they cannot meet again today and deal with this matter.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I also heard this Senate report about which I inquired. I would like to thank hon. members, particularly my colleagues on the opposition side, who would have liked to take part in the debate this afternoon but who, having already expressed their views, agreed to withhold their additional remarks so that we could pass this bill unanimously. This is a bill which will give senior citizens \$300 million in 1979 but which means starting from today a possible loss of money each day for those who receive the spouse's allowance, and I would like to say that in this case the Senate does not help speed up the business of the House.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I cannot see in fairness why two other hon. members may not have occasion to praise the bill which is evidently having difficulty which is beyond the scope of our procedures by any stretch of a point of order.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, it is the concern about the relevancy of it that worried me. I just want to say, through you, to the minister that if she is concerned, beyond making a speech, with respect to her bill and about a day's delay in the Senate, I want to assure the government House leader that we will be happy to deal with an amendment very quickly to make it retroactive, so that we can deal with that matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) I should say that when the House gave third reading to this bill, the Old Age Security Act amendment, we transmitted that information through the normal channels to the other place with the suggestion that, because of the needs that have been pointed out, particularly the benefits that would accrue to widows, action should be taken as quickly as possible and that we would attempt to arrange royal assent in order to provide that the bill be fully in effect before the end of the day.

Like other hon. members I regret that the Senate did not take action on that bill and that it adjourned without dealing with it. There is no way I can have consultations with members of the other place. I would just ask my colleagues in the House of Commons if they do not think now that the proposals made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) with respect to the Senate—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

Mr. Speaker: It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, notices of motion (papers), private bills, public bills. There being no items under the heading notices of motions for papers, or under the heading of private bills on the order paper, the House will proceed to public bills. I understand there is some disposition to call the measure standing in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez).