

The order being read for resuming debate on the motion of Mr. MacEachen, seconded by Mr. McIlraith,—That Bill C-207, An Act to authorize the making of contributions by Canada towards the cost of programs for the provision of assistance and welfare services to and in respect of persons in need, be now read a second time;

And on the amendment thereto proposed by Mr. Knowles, seconded by Mrs. MacInnis,—That Bill C-207 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the Government should give consideration to the immediate introduction of concurrent legislation providing for an old age pension of \$100 a month, without a means or needs test, for all persons 65 years of age and over.

RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: Since this amendment was moved last evening by the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) I have had an opportunity to look at it, and, in the same way as other honourable Members have done, I have proceeded to study the authorities and the precedents. I thought I had covered every possible argument either for or against the proposition in my study, but I can see, having listened to the opinions expressed today, that there are a number of aspects of this problem which I had not even thought might exist.

I do appreciate the suggestions made by all honourable Members, both for or against the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre and seconded by Mrs. MacInnis.

Perhaps I might put the amendment on record at this time since we have been considering the point of order for over an hour. The amendment was in the following terms: "That Bill No. C-207 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the government should give consideration to the immediate introduction of concurrent legislation providing for an old age pension of \$100 a month, without a means or needs test, for all persons 65 years of age and over."

I should mention immediately that one of the arguments considered by several speakers was the suggestion that if this amendment were carried a certain consideration would ensue and the bill would be killed. I had the impression that this was not a relevant argument. I do not think it is part of the procedural argument that if an amendment is accepted something else will follow, and I would be inclined not to consider either the arguments in favour of that proposition or those made against it.

Of course, if this motion can be considered at all, it is—as suggested by the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre—as being a reasoned amendment by virtue of Citation 382 of Beauchesne's 4th Edition, which reads as follows: "It is also competent to a Member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill, to move as an amendment to the question a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the bill."

I am not going to comment on the argument made by the honourable Member for Winnipeg North Centre in this respect. I gather that his objection had to do with the possibility that someone might argue that the amendment was not in opposition to the principle of the bill. But, as he himself recognized, that argument was not advanced and his view of this matter should therefore not be considered.

Reasoned amendments, as honourable Members have argued, are still subject to the general rule of relevancy. Page 527 of Mays' 17th edition states as follows: "The following rules govern the contents of reasoned amendments: