

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

objected to this procedure because it ran counter to the desire of the Prime Minister and his colleagues not to have the Canada Elections Act looked into.

● (10:00 p.m.)

This was primarily because the committee at one stage in 1963 passed a resolution that the age of voting be reduced from 21 years to 18 years. After that decision was made I heard, quietly and privately, many Liberals saying that they wished they had not supported the resolution because it was an embarrassing thing in the province of Quebec, because the most notable radicals in the separatist movement were in the 18 and 19 year age group, and they did not want to be tarred with that sort of distasteful brushing.

I submit that it is for that reason the government has refused to carry out the unanimous recommendation of the Privileges and Elections Committee of 1963, that the government has interfered with the privileges of the committee, and did it by having the committee stymied through the chairman. I submit that this has been an unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the committee.

Mr. Albert Béchard (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, March 1, 1966, at the organization meeting of the Committee on Privileges and Elections a motion was made, as stated by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard), in substantially these words, "that the Canada Elections Act be referred to the committee for study, examination and report." The motion was accepted by the committee. However, I am told that a point was raised at that time that the committee acted beyond its terms of reference because a study of the Elections Act was not referred to the committee.

Mr. Howard: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is not correct to say that an objection was raised at that time because it was not.

Mr. Béchard: Well, I am told by the chairman of the committee that it was raised, due to the fact that the act was not referred to the committee by the house. The chairman of the committee then requested opinions on the matter, not from the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) or the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh), but from the Clerk of the House, the parliamentary counsel and the chief of the committees branch. These three officials stated in writing to the chairman that the

[Mr. Howard.]

committee acted beyond its terms of reference.

Since then the chairman of the committee has requested space for the accommodation of another meeting, at which time the opinion of the officers of the house will be brought before members of the committee for consideration and action. I must state that there was no interference by the Prime Minister, the government, or any member of the government.

PUBLIC SERVICE—SUPERANNUATED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES—REQUEST FOR INCREASED PENSIONS

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday last, as reported at page 4424 of *Hansard*, I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) a question concerning retired civil servants. My question was put in these words:

In view of the fact that the government has on the order paper a notice of intention to amend the Public Service Superannuation Act, including the making of amendments of a general character, may I ask whether this will include an amendment to increase the pensions of civil servants already retired?

The Prime Minister's reply was very brief. He simply said:

No, Mr. Speaker.

I then put a supplementary question, to which the Prime Minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, this matter is being brought to our attention, as my hon. friend knows, not only by him but by those directly concerned, and it is under continuous consideration. There is no intention to change the position at this time.

I find that answer very disappointing, if not somewhat confusing. We are told by the Prime Minister that the matter is under continuous consideration but that there is no intention to change the position at this time.

The basis of my question last Thursday was a resolution, which is order No. 51 on the order paper, which forecasts legislation dealing with a number of pension statutes. It is obvious from the resolution that the main purpose of the legislation will be to provide integration between a number of pension plans and the Canada Pension Plan. However, at the end of the resolution, the Public Service Superannuation Act having been mentioned, there is this phrase:

—and to make amendments of a general nature in connection with the administration of those acts—