

Old Age Security Act

The hon. member for Lotbinière has surely raised during the procedural debate some arguments which off-hand seemed quite valid. In the first place, he quoted Standing Order 75 the application of which I tried to refute this afternoon, but I think that it deals rather with the procedure than with acceptability.

I have already discussed the matter this afternoon.

Afterwards, he referred us to the 18th edition of May, pages 507 and 508 where we read that it is possible for hon. members to amend every part of a bill. It is said:

• (2030)

[English]

Amendments may be made in every part of the bill, whether in the clauses or the schedules.

[Translation]

Then he referred us to pages 508, 509 and 512. Tonight I was happy to see he went a little further than this afternoon and had taken the trouble of going to subsection 12, page 510, where we can read—

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member for Lotbinière on a question of privilege.

Mr. Fortin: I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Speaker.

With all due respect, I would have reached subsection (12) had someone not called it five o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Agreed. I recognize that the question of privilege is well taken but anyway the Chair has noticed that subsection (12) also applies. The hon. member wants to quote subsections from pages 505, 508, 509 and 510 and, as it happens, subsection (12) states:

[English]

Amendments or new clauses creating public charges cannot be proposed, if no money resolution or ways and means resolution has been passed, or if the amendment or clause is not covered by the terms of the resolution. This rule, which is of fundamental importance, is fully explained in chapter XVII and on page 754.

[Translation]

In his remarks this evening, the hon. member for Lotbinière referred us to page 754 but he went quickly to chapter 29. I would suggest that he look up page 692 of May's 18th edition where there is a paragraph which deals with this royal recommendation and says word for word what can be found in Beauchesne's citation 246. It reads:

[English]

—an amendment infringes the financial initiative of the crown not only if it increases the amount but also if it extends the objects and purposes or relaxes the conditions and qualifications expressed in the communication by which the crown has demanded or recommended the charge.

[Translation]

In another argument, he claimed that the procedure during consideration of the bill by the committee had been restrictive and he would like this House, through the Chair, to be less strict in applying the rule and to allow the members to go even further than the bill, that is discuss

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel).]

the legislation itself and accept all kinds of amendments. I find it very hard to agree with his argument.

Coming back to the notices of motion now before us, the first one proposes to raise to \$200 the basic amount of the pension. According to all the sources that can be referred to, it is obvious that this notice of motion is out of order because it imposes a burden on the government and there is no recommendation from His Excellency.

His notices of motion Nos. 2 to 5 which tend to reduce to various levels the pensionable age for certain pensioners constitute an expenditure of public monies and go beyond the object of the bill.

Hon. members have only to consider the recommendation now before us and the bill to see that the proposal under study is a measure aiming at raising the basic old age pension to \$100 a month.

• (2040)

The hon. members in submitting their various notices of motions are proposing amendments relating to the eligibility age; surely this question is not relevant and is not currently before the House.

For all these reasons, it is quite impossible for the Chair to accept the five motions in question.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved that Bill C-147, to amend the Old Age Security Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Lalonde moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would not like at this stage to delay unduly the proceedings or to repeat what I already said at the second reading stage or even on other occasions.

We are now debating a bill which affects an important sector of our population that is faced with a particular problem which is that of not being in a position to live decently for lack of income and this is why we have tried, in moving amendments at the report stage, to eliminate this shortcoming in the law.

In fact, we can see glaring injustices such as two people aged 65 receiving full pensions and the guaranteed income supplement if they have no income whereas a married couple, where one spouse is aged 63 or 64, will only receive half this amount. This amounts to accepting the principle that the necessary products vary in value according to the age of the people concerned. This is obviously a glaring injustice for all those people and particularly when one knows that at 60 it is absolutely impossible for anyone without an income to expect earning one. So this would have been an excellent opportunity for correcting this situation.

And, Mr. Speaker, we remember particularly a speech made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) after the results of the election were known and in which he stated that in order to remain in power, he was ready to hear suggestions from the various opposition parties.