

Oral Questions

SOCIAL SECURITY

ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SINGLE WOMEN AND WIDOWS OVER AGE 60

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It was suggested, I believe, that provision would be made whereby a woman of 60 whose husband is over 65 and receiving a pension will be eligible for the old age security pension. I ask the minister, why is he allowing this discrimination against single women who are over 60 and widows who are over 60.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, if anyone can be accused of discrimination, it is the hon. member, because this proposal will apply not only to wives, but also to husbands below 65 who may be in need. The provision will apply if one of the spouses is over 65 and will apply to both spouses.

As far as the other element of the question is concerned, once more the purpose of this particular measure is to make sure that once the spouse who earns the family income retires, a pension is paid. We want to make sure that the couple is not forced to live on a pension for one only. That is the objective of this piece of legislation and not that of paying pensions to everybody at age 60.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

APPOINTMENT OF REFEREE UNDER BILL C-12 CONCERNING GRAIN HANDLERS DISPUTE

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour and has to do with Bill C-12. Has the minister appointed the referee under the terms of that legislation? If so, will he give us the name?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker. A colleague of the hon. member's asked the question yesterday, or perhaps on Tuesday, and I replied that Mr. Justice Bayda of the Court of Queen's Bench, Saskatchewan, had been appointed.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the referee to be appointed under Bill C-12. I think the minister was referring to the Industrial Inquiry Commission. I am referring to the referee, sir.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): No, Mr. Speaker, it has not become necessary to appoint that referee. No word has been communicated to me to the effect that either of the parties that particular dispute is running into difficulty with respect to the interpretation of the collective agreement, as of this time.

REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF MR. JUSTICE BAYDA

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is there any reason why

[Mr. Baldwin.]

the full terms of reference under which Mr. Justice Bayda is working cannot be made public at this time?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will be pleased to give more amplification if that is desirable. As I indicated in the House, those terms will permit him to go into the whole history of labour relations in that particular industry, with a view to making recommendations for improvement and greater efficiency. In essence, that is what they are.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

DISCREPANCY BETWEEN EARNINGS OF GRAIN HANDLERS WORKING FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES AND THOSE WORKING FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Has he consulted with the President of the Treasury Board and attempted to deal with the serious discrepancy which has arisen because of the implementation of the Perry report with respect to grain handlers in Vancouver. The discrepancy is this: Grain handlers working for private companies in the port of Vancouver earn up to \$2.50 an hour more than grain handlers working for the federal government in Prince Rupert. These grain handlers work under much more severe conditions. Has the minister discussed with the President of the Treasury Board the possibility of removing this very serious discrepancy?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to comment on a matter in the labour relations field which does not fall within my jurisdiction. I think the hon. member would be well advised to direct his question to the President of the Treasury Board.

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, has the President of the Treasury Board considered this serious matter? Has he considered the representations of the Public Service Alliance on regional pay differences and their serious effect upon employees in western Canada in particular?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, all federal government employees are covered by collective agreements. Procedures have been provided for to negotiate working conditions and wages and in the cases mentioned by the hon. member, the procedures apply and will apply and when negotiations take place the points made by the hon. member will then be discussed and agreements reached.