

*Old Age Security Act*

Champlain (Mr. Matte), the reason given by the Speaker was that the motion gave specific terms of reference to the committee. I think that this procedure is ridiculous, but I must respectfully abide by the decision of the Chair.

Therefore, if the Chair argues that the House cannot give specific terms of reference to a committee at the third reading stage for a particular bill, I feel that Your Honour could use the same argument to rule that this amendment is in order. What are the terms of reference that we ask for if we are to get any in this amendment? And I quote:

... for further study

That means a more thorough study.

... of the eligibility requirements under the said act.

We are not talking about eligibility at 60 or 65, even if we hope that the committee will do that as it undertook to do, but that is not stipulated in the amendment. We are asking for a further study of the eligibility requirements under the act. This does by no means involve expenditures or increased taxes, but only a study by the committee of the recommendation of the governor in council with regard to the requirements for eligibility. What was the recommendation of the governor in council? It might be interesting to read again part of it. The Governor in Council specifies in his recommendation first, that the basic amount be raised to such and such an amount and that this provision come into effect on April 1, 1973, with which we entirely agree. Second, a future escalation will commence on April 1, 1974. Third, under Part II of the Act, the base year of the escalation formula will be specified. This is still part of the recommendation to simplify the calculation of income.

When the Governor in Council suggests in his recommendation that the calculation of income be simplified, he agrees that the House of Commons should thoroughly study the conditions of eligibility for the pension under Bill C-147.

• (2140)

Mr. Speaker, this is not legislation "Y", but we want, through the amendment of the hon. member for Shefford, the Committee Health, Welfare and Social Affairs to consider the eligible age concerning Bill C-147.

There, Mr. Speaker, is what we want. This is why we say that this bill must be referred to the committee and that, within 48 hours, it be sent back to us so that pensions may be paid, as the government suggests, effective April 1, 1973. We do not oppose the recommendation of the Governor General to pass the bill; we only request that the committee make a more thorough study of it.

Mr. Speaker, I can only refer you to chapter 21 intitled "Third Reading in Commons", on page 531 of May's Parliamentary Practice, 18th edition.

Mr. Speaker, I wish my English were as good as your French, so that I could quote. I would read out the whole book if necessary readily and convincingly to prove that according to precedents, as indicated on page 531 and those that follow, an amendment at the third reading stage is procedurally in order, provided it does not negate the principle of the bill, which the hon. member for Shefford's motion does not do.

26087—23½

Another condition stipulated on page 531 and those that follow is that no financial obligation be involved, and I shall humbly point out, Mr. Speaker, that no such obligation is involved in the motion. And finally it is stipulated that at the third reading stage immediate reading of a bill can be opposed and the bill can be referred to a committee, provided no very specific terms of reference be given the committee. This is exactly what we are doing when we suggest a further study.

Mr. Speaker, I would have so many arguments to put forward. I know your ability, your respect for private members' initiatives, and I dare hope most sincerely for my colleagues and for myself that in the light of existing precedents which govern the House, this amendment, which complies with those precedents, will be accepted so that the committee may study this bill more thoroughly.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, for your information, this amendment is actually a request of the House to refer the bill back for further study of the conditions of eligibility which were and are, as I said, stipulated in the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor General of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, if we read bill C-147 and if I listen to the directives and advice that you gave at the beginning before allowing me to speak, I notice that you claimed we were changing the work at the second reading stage. This is absolutely not true.

At the second reading stage, it is the privilege of this House to refer the bill to the committee. What are the stages of a bill? First reading is a formality. During the second reading stage, Mr. Speaker, we freely and rapidly express ourselves and there comes the privilege of the House to refer the bill to the committee. Then the committee brings back its report. This is what we call the report stage. Once the report stage is done with, the bill is before the House for third reading, the present stage. When the House honestly and competently is of the opinion that the bill is more or less acceptable or that the committee report is satisfactory, it is its strict privilege to call for a vote, with a motion such as that brought forward by the hon. member for Shefford, to the effect that the bill be referred back to the committee for further study.

Mr. Speaker, I could give many examples to convince you that it is important to refer the bill back to the committee to enable hon. members further to study the recommendation of the governor in council concerning the eligibility requirements. We want a report, in 48 hours, to the effect that the pension will be paid as of April 1, 1973 and this time, Mr. Speaker, I hope the bill will be acceptable.

[*English*]

**Mr. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. There are basically two grounds on which this amendment fails. First, it seeks to amend, not the bill before us but the act that the bill before us seeks to amend. Therefore, it must fail on that ground. Second, if the amendment were carried it would in effect go beyond the royal recommendation; therefore it would increase the expenditure which the Crown would have to make for this particular program. On these two fundamental points, Mr. Speaker, the amendment must fail.