

Suggested Reduction of Pension Age

patted on the back by others, so perhaps it will not do any harm if we pat ourselves on the back today. The fact is that we are dealing with a subject matter which for nine decades or more has been a most explosive one. I suppose few issues have generated as much ill-will in parliament as has the question of the redistribution of the seats in the House of Commons. For it now to be clear that we are capable, with the concurrence of all parties, of approving a bill which refers this matter to a group of independent people is, as I say, a credit to parliament.

It is true it ought to have been done long ago. As the Minister of Transport has pointed out, what we are dealing with here at this time is not the seats of particular members who happen to be here but the representation of the Canadian people. This way of doing it is a proper way, and I am sure we are all glad we have reached this red letter day in our history. As the previous speaker has said, there will be differences over some of the details. I welcome the suggestion of the Minister of Transport that clause 13 be left until the others have been disposed of. Actually, my colleagues and I do not quarrel with the 20 per cent figure which is contained in that clause but I recognize it is a subject of contention, so let us dispose of all the matters we can agree on and then have the battle, if battle there must be, over that particular clause.

There are one or two other clauses concerning which we think amendments ought to be made, and in at least one case I have the necessary amendment ready. I should like to say one word to the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings by way of correcting a reference he made a short while ago. He intimated that Nova Scotia might soon be protected by the senatorial floor and he made a reference to someone—I gather it must have been to me—as wanting to remove that floor in an action taken a few days ago. I would remind the hon. gentleman that I did not seek to remove the floor at all. I may have tried to remove the Senate, but in the bill I put forward I retained the floors which the Senate now provides. In other words, I may have tried to do away with the cat but at least I tried to preserve the grin, and maybe that is what counts in this matter.

Mr. Nowlan: I think the baby would go out with the bath water.

Mr. Knowles: If it is only a grin that is left it could not swallow the baby, anyway.

Most of what needs to be said can be said on the various clauses. We join with members of all parties in the house in welcoming this opportunity for parliament to show its

sense of responsibility toward this very important matter. There are details which remain to be considered, but the main point of what we are now doing is that we are making a decision to have the redistribution of constituencies done by an independent body. This is a most welcome step.

Mr. Olson: There are only 30 or 40 seconds left until five o'clock. All I want to say is that we join with the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings and with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in saying that the passage of this bill to set up this commission will indeed be a red letter day and a proud day for parliament.

I sincerely hope this parliament will show the same spirit and attitude toward the recommendations of the commission when they come back to us as has been shown here this afternoon.

May I call it five o'clock?

The Deputy Chairman: It being five o'clock and in order to permit the house to proceed to the consideration of private members' bills, shall I rise, report progress, and request leave to sit again?

Progress reported.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Batten): It being five o'clock the house will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely notices of motions and public bills.

PENSIONS**SUGGESTION TO REDUCE QUALIFYING AGE**

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster) moved:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should consider the advisability of reducing the qualifying age for old age pensions, without a means test, to 67 years by 1967.

He said: I think the purpose of the proposal which stands in my name is so easily grasped that it is not necessary for me to devote any great length of time to outlining it. The intention is clearly outlined in the resolution which is now before us—to reduce the qualifying age for old age pensions, without a means test, to 67 years by 1967, that being of course our centenary year. As I put it, we are aiming at age 67 by 1967.

In my view there are two good reasons why this should be done, or at least why the principle of the resolution should be sent to an appropriate committee for study. In the first place I am sure it is well known to every hon. member in this house that there are many thousands of families across the country with senior citizens in the 65 to 70 years of age brackets, who do not have quite enough to live on and who have a little