

[Later:]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should like to reply to this question of privilege. I should like to indicate that there is obviously a disagreement on the matter of control between the hon. member and myself in view of the statement that I made. It was my impression, Mr. Speaker, that the party that named or appointed the chairman was in some degree in control.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: If this is incorrect I do ask to withdraw my statement, but in exchange I suggest it might be better perhaps if in the future the chairman were from the government side and this would give the opposition control. We would be prepared to do that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Prime Minister may wish to correct his words when he says that a certain party names the chairman. The chairman is named by the entire committee and does not represent a party.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Also on the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding that the chairmen of committees were supposed to preside over the committees in an impartial way rather than try to control them. I must say that the Prime Minister's statement was rather shocking to me.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is dead right, and that is why I suggest that in the future the chairmen should be a member from the Liberal party.

MR. NIELSEN—INFORMATION CANADA—REPLY TO
QUESTION BY MINISTER

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. My question of privilege arises out of the answer given by the minister responsible for Information Canada to the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster. Here I am referring to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, issue No. 25, the minutes of May 21, 1970, at page 25:47, where Mr. Phillips, Executive Assistant, Information Canada, was reported as saying:

In other words, Information Canada will be providing analysis of public information media, clipping services, which will automatically go to all members of parliament, to the government, both sides of the House and to officials. But in addition to that, it will make media analysis digests on specific subjects where a department needs it for its own internal uses.

I want to ask the minister if that, indeed, is what is going to happen in the department?

Old Age Security Act

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is not a question of privilege. The hon. member might have asked this as a question but the question period expired four minutes ago.

Mr. Nielsen: On the question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that he is not respecting well known rules of the House. This has nothing at all to do with privilege and I hope he keeps that in mind. I will hear the hon. member now.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I want to press the question of privilege because it appears manifest that the minister's reply is different from the published evidence of a committee of this House. Either the minister is incorrect or was unintentionally misleading this House today or this evidence is incorrect, and the minister should be allowed to clarify the matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This could be done during the question period. I suggest to the hon. member that, as is well known to all members, debate as to facts cannot be termed or considered privilege. The hon. member cannot raise this matter as a question of privilege, and that is my ruling. Orders of the day.

• (3:10 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING AMOUNT OF PENSION,
MAXIMUM SUPPLEMENT AND ESCALATION
THEREOF

The House resumed, from Wednesday, December 2, consideration of the motion of Mr. Munro that Bill C-202, to amend the Old Age Security Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Services.

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, ever since the government took office it has led the elderly people of this country to hope for great things. We members know this because we have been receiving delegations, messages and letters from elderly people across the country asking to have their pensions upgraded, pointing out the gap between the cost of living and their pensions, and urging that something be done. Every time delegations came to Ottawa to meet the government they returned home with full hearts and empty hands. They were led to believe that relief was just around the corner, that the government was taking time to make a survey of their needs, what it would cost them to live in a modern way, and that when the package deal was ready they would be everlastingly grateful for having a government which was so considerate of elderly people.