

Supply—Annuities to Widows

ment of an annuity. I hesitated in recommending this because I thought it might create a precedent, but upon investigation I found that a precedent had been already created. I found that Lady Lafontaine, whose husband had been Chief Justice of the Appeal Court of Quebec, had been granted a pension. I found also that Lady Cartier had been granted a pension and so I recommended to the Minister of Finance that this item be included in the estimates.

Mr. HEAPS: What was the income of the late Chief Justice? I believe he died before the salaries were increased, and was receiving \$7,000 per annum.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): When did the Chief Justice die?

Mr. LAPOINTE: I think it was in 1905 or 1906.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Has this pension been paid since that time?

Mr. LAPOINTE: No.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): When did it commence?

Mr. LAPOINTE: This is the first year.

Mr. STEWART (Leeds): Why should it commence now?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Is there some special need at the present time?

Mr. LAPOINTE: That has been represented to me, and I must say that the most insistent representations were made by the hon. member for Southeast Grey.

Mr. HEAPS: Will the Minister of Justice always acquiesce in representations made by the hon. member for Southeast Grey?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Apparently she was mistaken, for she told me that her friends would support it.

Mr. HEAPS: If any other representations are made to the hon. minister by the hon. member for Southeast Grey will he acquiesce in them?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Not necessarily.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It is very difficult to object to a particular item of this character, and it is next to impossible to decide wisely when we do not know the circumstances connected with the particular case. Perhaps it is not desirable that all the conditions should be revealed to the general public, but I think we are creating a very dangerous precedent when we begin to pick out certain individuals and take the public money to pay pensions to them. I do not see

[Mr. Lapointe.]

why one particular class of people should be considered in a different light from those in another class, or one individual be given assistance denied to another. As my hon. friend behind me suggests, if you select the widows of judges, why not the widows of former members? Why not people outside of politics altogether? In connection with the old age pensions we were very particular to insist that the beneficiaries should have their private affairs examined very carefully, and if they have any other income, that is deducted from the amount they would otherwise receive from the public funds. I do not think it is a good principle to begin to pick out this, that or the other individual who happens to have some particular friend in the government and pay them annuities out of the public funds. Probably any one case out of a thousand which might be brought here would arouse our sympathy, but I cannot support this particular case without having all the details placed before the committee.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I desire to support what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has said. Anyone drawing the substantial salary of the late Chief Justice Taschereau should have provided for his widow through insurance. Most of us are forced to get along on smaller incomes than that, and we are compelled to take out the necessary insurance to provide for our wives and families. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has said, this is establishing a very dangerous precedent. I do not know just what representations were made to the hon. minister by the hon. member for Southeast Grey, but I know that this is the first time that he has acted in conformity with her representations.

Mr. LAPOINTE: She is not the only one who made the representations.

Mr. CAMPBELL: If the minister will go through Hansard, he will find many other representations that the hon. lady member has made that are more deserving than this one, but that he and his colleagues have totally ignored, and I certainly cannot subscribe to the principle contained in this item.

Mr. HEAPS: From what the minister has said, it would appear that this lady has been a widow for about twenty-four years. This is an extraordinary procedure, to my way of thinking. After this lady has been a widow for twenty-four years, it is proposed to grant her a pension of so much per annum. If there were any necessity to give her a pension, it should have been granted imme-