

Old Age Pensions

of the government at this session against which I am complaining, against which I raise this grievance.

The Minister of Finance says I do not know what the government is going to do. Well, he is correct. I really do not know what the government is going to do, but I believe I know what any government going to the country this year would do. My grievance is that this matter is being stalled, and I call upon the government to stall no longer but to announce within the next day or so what it intends to do by way of a much needed increase in old age pensions for the senior citizens of this country.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I should like to raise a matter if that particular subject is concluded.

Mr. Speaker: Is discussion of the grievance raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre concluded?

Mr. F. D. Shaw (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words with respect to the grievance raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I shall be extremely brief. One feels compelled to be brief in view of the limitations placed upon debate. During this session my colleagues and I have urged the government upon different occasions to make an announcement with respect to its intentions regarding increases in old age security and old age assistance payments.

We agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that the old age pensioners in Canada have been given every reason to conclude that possibly something will be done during this session of parliament. A number of members on the opposite side of the house have indicated their support for such action. Members of the official opposition and members of the C.C.F. as well as our own members have urged such action. In fact, I have yet to hear anyone stand on the floor of the house and indicate that he was opposed to such a proposition. That has caused old age pension recipients right across Canada to conclude that something will be done.

Surely the government knows now, midway through this session, whether it contemplates making an announcement or introducing legislation if such is necessary with respect to this matter. We join with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre in suggesting that since a decision has been made one way or the other, the government is now under an obligation to make an early announcement with respect to this matter. We stand firmly with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and his colleagues in urging that an announcement be made within the next few days.

[Mr. Knowles.]

Mr. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that everyone on this side of the house feels that the government's decision with regard to this matter of old age pensions should be announced immediately. I think that is a point of such obvious merit that it hardly needs labouring here, except to say that to delay the announcement is to render a disservice to parliament, but that disservice is dwarfed entirely by the disservice that is rendered—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must point out to the hon. gentleman that if he is speaking to the grievance raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, he will not be able to switch to another subject.

Mr. Fulton: Surely, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: He will have to resume his seat and he will not be able to speak to another matter. A moment ago, when he first rose, I took it that he wanted to raise a different subject.

Mr. Fulton: I want to do that, Mr. Speaker. I am just concluding—

Mr. Speaker: Let us not be technical about the matter. If the hon. member wants to do that he will have to conclude speaking about the matter raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and will have to engage in the discussion of a new subject.

Mr. Knowles: He said it very well in a few words, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Fulton: I was trying to lead into it gradually, Mr. Speaker, without too abrupt a switch. But I should be glad to follow your advice in the matter. I shall now deal with the grievance that I rose to deal with.

Mr. Harris: May I just point out, Mr. Speaker, that it has been your custom to allow everyone else in the house who wants to speak on the grievance an opportunity to do so.

Mr. Fulton: Nobody stood up.

Mr. Speaker: A moment ago I asked if the discussion was completed, at which point the hon. member for Red Deer rose. As he sat down and the hon. member for Kamloops took the floor, again I asked—perhaps in a very mild and low voice—"Is the discussion concluded?". I do not know whether or not my voice was heard at that moment, but I took it that it was. If discussion is not concluded, may I ask whether there are any other hon. members who wish to speak on the grievance raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre?