It was introduced because there was general agreement among all parties in the house. Some member of the government might take the initiative, or some private member, as has been done before, and get in touch with the members of the house to see if something could not be worked out. But there should be no contribution from the public funds of Canada. All of us, whether we have completed our service and paid up our full assessment or not, should contribute to the fund out of which widows of hon. members who have served the country well could be provided for. As the hon. member for Simcoe North said, no wife of a member of parliament does other than serve this country well.

I know that perhaps I have gone a little beyond the scope of this bill and I hope, Mr. Chairman, you will forgive me for having discussed this matter. I believe some consideration should be given it. May I again say that we support this measure as it stands, and that we should like to see something done subsequently for the women who will become widows when members of this house die.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): First of all I wish to say I support what has been said by the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar and the hon. member for Simcoe North. I will, however, say—and I hope it would be included in anything that might be arranged—that if the widow married again I think provision should be made that the pension be cut off immediately.

What I am on my feet for is this. When the hon. member for Peace River spoke he said he thought this pension was the only one that would be affected by the old age pension, and would be reduced. I believe the hon. member for Peace River forgets that war veterans' widows' pensions are reduced, or the old age pension is reduced according to what the pensioner gets, or according to what the earnings are. I do not object to the members of parliament having their pensions cut, but I certainly object to the veterans having theirs reduced in the way that is done at the present time.

Mr. Fulton: I just want to make a comment or two on this bill. As one who was not always on the side of the majority in connection with the original legislation in this case, I want to make it clear that I am not going to raise any unwelcome or controversial points at this time. However, I want to say this. I think the government is doing the right thing in introducing this amendment which will prevent the amount of the pension otherwise payable on full qualification being automatically doubled. It will also prevent what would otherwise be the result, the automatically doubling of the maximum contributions to be made by the treasury. My only regret on this score is that the government did not announce it as their intention at the time they introduced the bill to increase the sessional indemnity. However, it is being done now and I am sure there can be no objection.

However, in connection with what the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar said, I think it should be pointed out that the length of time necessary to qualify will be only four or more parliaments or 17 or more years after this amendment goes through. Unless that is made clear I think it might have been taken from what he said that that was the length of time necessary to qualify at the present time. I may say that I would not have had as many objections as I had to the original legislation had there been written into the act a longer minimum time which it was necessary to put in before a member qualified, which will be the effect of this amendment. I am therefore very much in agreement with this amendment in that regard.

I want to make this further suggestion. While there are other modifications which I think might be made to the retirement allowance legislation, such as the provision of an age floor below which a member would not receive the pension if he retired from the house at less than that age, which according to the actuaries who appeared before the committee two years ago would have the effect of substantially lessening the treasury contribution, I am not going to press that point now, except to say that I hope it will be considered in conjunction with the other suggestions which are being made, if they are to receive consideration.

One other matter I wish to mention is in connection with the provision of retirement allowances to widows of members who have retired. I think there would be a quite simple way of covering that matter, and one which would not increase the burden on the treasury. That would be to do as is done now with a number of other forms of retirement allowances, namely to put it on a last-survivor basis, under which the person entitled to receive the allowance may, at the time he begins to receive it, elect whether he will take the full pension payable to himself and stopping with his death or take a little smaller pension, the amount of which would be worked out on an actuarial basis, payable to himself or his widow, whichever may survive the longest.

If the matter is to receive consideration, that suggestion might be one that could be considered, inasmuch as it would not have