

pay as income, even if there were no dependent's allowance. After many protests the dominion government permitted the pension authorities to take into account the amount of assigned pay which was returned to the soldier, if credited to him. Later, further amendments were made to provide that in all cases where dependent's allowance had not been awarded, the board was authorized to disregard any pay allotted or assigned by a member of the forces. Cases have been brought to my attention, however, of men in receipt of old age pensions whose wives are in receipt of assigned pay and dependent's allowance, and in which both those amounts were added and calculated as income. If assigned pay is not to be considered as income, why should it be credited if, in addition, the old lady gets dependent's allowance. I ask the minister to look into this matter, because, if the principle is right in one case, it should be followed right through, though I am frank to say that I should like to see both assigned pay and dependent's allowance disregarded when the wife is in receipt of it while her husband is in receipt of the old age pension.

The other matter has to do with the interpretation of the regulations by the Department of Finance, and I am going to cite one case which I am sure illustrates a great many others. I refer to the case of a man in receipt of old age pension who dies on the fifteenth of the month. In the case that has been drawn to my attention the widow went to collect the cheque and was told that since her husband had died on the fifteenth there was no cheque for her. This is looked upon as a callous act, and some have gone so far as to say that those administering the act were really robbing the old age pensioners. Here is a woman who was carrying on in the early part of the month, her husband dies on the fifteenth, and, thinking there is a cheque coming to her for half a month, she goes to collect it, only to find that the finance department and the old age pension board at Ottawa have ruled that she has no cheque coming. Even at this stage of the session I have no apology to offer for bringing these matters to the attention of the minister, because I believe they should be looked into and remedied.

Mr. ILSLEY: Certainly I shall look into the matter the hon. member has mentioned.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): I was surprised to listen to some of the arguments advanced from both sides of the house this evening. First we listened to the Liberals trying to take all the credit for bringing in the Old Age Pensions Act. Then the Cooperative

[Mr. Graydon.]

Commonwealth Federation came along, claiming they were responsible for it. Then, lo and behold, the Conservatives came along and said they were really responsible for it. I never saw so many hon. members vying with each other for the credit for giving so little. I think the amount we give our old age pensioners is a shame, and I make no apology for that statement. The best test to determine whether or not these old people are getting a sufficient income would be for some of us to try to live on that amount. Could we live on \$20 a month? And mind you, not all old age pensioners receive that amount. As has been pointed out already, it varies from province to province; and while the pension may be \$20 in one province, that does not mean that all the old age pensioners even in that province receive that amount.

I am very much disappointed because this legislation has been brought down at this late date, because I believe it is one of the most important and humane measures that could be introduced. To bring it in at this stage of the session is almost an insult to the intelligence of the members of this house. I think we might well have stayed over another few days and given this matter more discussion. As the hon. member for New Westminster has pointed out, if that had been done I believe every hon. member would have insisted that the pension be increased.

The minister has made a statement as to what is going to be done in regard to old age pensions. He has said that it will be made possible for the provinces to increase the amount paid by \$5 a month, with the dominion contributing seventy-five per cent of the cost and the provinces twenty-five per cent. When the social security committee was discussing this matter it recommended that the amount should be increased. The government has given consideration to that recommendation and has made it possible for an increase to be brought about. The committee brought in another, equally important recommendation however, that the age limit be reduced. That has not been done. As a member of that committee I was firmly convinced that the government would lower the age limit, and I am extremely disappointed because that has not been done. The recommendation was contained in an interim report of the committee, and I thought that report dealt with the minimum requirements. No amount was set; that was left to the discretion of the government, though, of course, we trusted that it would not be too small. The reduction of the age limit also was left to the discretion of the government, and I