

*Old Age Security Act*

thetical. In this House we use the word "shall" if the entitlement is definite.

Obviously, the word "may" carries a different connotation. A man may do something depending on a number of things. Often the word "may" reflects the intent of regulations much more than of legislation. If this amendment were passed, we would provide that under certain circumstances a person who reaches the age of 60 may be paid a certain pension. I suggest that it need not necessarily be paid. Therefore, it is difficult to say if the recommendation would apply to this amendment. After all, we are to establish that an old age pension of \$100 a month shall be payable as of right to every Canadian who reaches the age of 65. That is definite. When you reach that age you will, on application, receive that amount of money. However, motion No. 2 does not make the payment mandatory.

Therefore, in my opinion, it is not possible for the Governor General's recommendation to say how much money is to be involved, because some people may apply and some may not. In any event, I think such procedure is totally archaic, and if minority governments of the present type are to continue for some time—as I suggest they may—we need to change our present procedures. If we follow present procedures, subsequent parliaments may find themselves in difficulty.

Why must we rely on Standing Order 62 which has to do with financial provisions? Why must there be the Governor General's recommendation, which in any event is a lot of malarkey. The Governor General does not know anything about the money we want. The government decides what money it wants and it puts the Governor General's recommendation on the order paper. He does not even present it with his own hand, whatever that may mean. It is just a stage of a bill. The recommendation is not a way and means provision. Really, the recommendation merely covers government expenditures. In some ways this is a totally new device. The government discontinued the old ways but has not adopted the new ways. If we as a minority parliament think that in certain circumstances people 60 years of age should be retired, we should say so and not bother about the gobbledygook involving the Governor General.

These remarks also apply to the third motion which suggests that "a monthly pension may be paid to every person, even though the age is lower than that provided for in the present act if the spouse receives a monthly pension on attaining the age provided for in the present act." The Governor General has nothing to do with that. How can one include a recommendation with respect to this provision unless it is an open-ended recommendation—because I do not think even Statistics Canada can tell the government how many spouses are in receipt of the old age pension. A spouse may be male or female. Therefore, this matter is even more "may-ish" and "if-ish" than the previous matter of which I spoke, because we are not sure how many people are involved. We do not know if the man is older than the woman or if the woman is older than the man. I suggest that all these arguments presented on the basis of what is contained in Beauchesne's and the other authorities referred to are hypocritical. No, that is not the right word.

**An hon. Member:** "Hypothetical."

[Mr. Peters.]

**Mr. Peters:** Well, they are a farce and do not mean anything. They do not apply to the circumstances because such arguments do not take into consideration the changes made to our Standing Orders. I hope, Mr. Speaker—I throw in this thought—that the Clerk and the Clerk Assistant will be given sabbatical leave so they can rewrite the rules in order that we can apply our present Standing Orders.

• (2020)

I do not believe that the arguments being made apply to the circumstances. If we accept the argument by the government or other members against allowing the introduction of "if", "may" or permissive clauses that are operative only after the regulations making them operative are passed, we are not doing justice to the changes that were made to the Standing Orders. I am sure many members would be pleased to see these amendments accepted, to vote on them, and if the amendments are passed, the government—which obviously would like to stay in office—would be quite happy to find the money and might even go to the Governor General to ask him to change the recommendation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Peters:** This is a minority parliament, and to stand on an archaic rule backed by archaic precedents is not in keeping with the intention of most members of this House. I hope Your Honour will take this into consideration and that you will be lenient and make operative the decision that I am sure most Members of Parliament wish to be implemented. This involves a reduction in the age limit, not necessarily as a right but as a "may". I hope Your Honour will give consideration to this aspect of the matter.

There is no precedent Your Honour can quote that can satisfy me. The precedent is really based on the change in the Standing Orders. When we got rid of ways and means resolutions and the recommendations attached thereto, we substituted the song and dance but retained something that really does not mean anything. I suggest that under the new Standing Orders the Governor General's recommendation has no purpose in this or any other bill. I hope Your Honour will consider the changes that have been made and will assist the members of this House in implementing them.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Translation]

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, following the remarks of my colleague from Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) and the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), I should like to add a few points to show that if we abide by the letter of the interpretation given in Beauchesne, the House would constantly be paralyzed.

Let us consider for instance the case where the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr) proposed a motion to display the national flag in the House. The cost of the flag alone entailed an expenditure which should have been refused. There is obviously no motion or legislation that can be passed in this House and entail no expenditure. This