

Old Age Pensions

whether his department has taken any action in connection with this strike?

Hon. Humphrey Mitchell (Minister of Labour): My department has received no request for mediation from either side in this dispute; neither has my department received any representations. As my hon. friend well knows, this dispute with the asbestos miners in Quebec comes exclusively within the jurisdiction of the government of the province of Quebec.

OLEOMARGARINE

QUESTION OF APPEAL TO PRIVY COUNCIL FROM
DECISION OF SUPREME COURT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. L. Church (Broadview): I wish to ask a question of the Minister of Justice. Has he received any request from anybody about an appeal to the privy council in England with respect to the oleomargarine question?

Hon. Stuart S. Garson (Minister of Justice): I understand that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture has instructed counsel to apply to the privy council for leave to appeal from the decision in the margarine case.

Mr. Church: Has the minister received any representations from the Attorney General of Ontario?

Mr. Garson: No.

KING'S BIRTHDAY

INQUIRY AS TO DATE OF CELEBRATION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Victor Quelch (Acadia): I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Can he say on what date the king's birthday will be celebrated this year?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I will take the hon. member's question as notice. I think the date has been settled, but I shall have to verify the fact and make an answer at a later sitting.

SUPPLY

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister) moved that the house go into committee of supply.

OLD AGE PENSIONS—AMENDMENT, MR. KNOWLES

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I desire to have recourse to the ancient doctrine that redress of grievances should be considered before the grant of supply is made. I rise in fact to deal with a matter which is a grievance of a great many

people both in the constituency that I represent and throughout the country. This is a matter on which I have tried in a number of ways to get some satisfactory action during the course of this session, but without any success thus far.

For example, on Friday, March 11, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 1384, I addressed a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin). I called his attention to the fact that with the province of Manitoba adding a small supplement to the old age pension we had now reached the position where, in six out of the nine provinces of Canada, the federal government is paying less than 75 per cent of the total pension received by the pensioner. In his reply the Minister of National Health and Welfare objected to my mathematics and declared that the federal government is paying 75 per cent of the pension so far as the basic pension of \$30 is concerned. That is true, but it evades the point I sought to make, namely, that in a number of provinces supplements are being paid, which means that that basic percentage has been upset. For example, in British Columbia, where a supplement of \$10 is paid, it means that the total pension received by many pensioners is \$40 a month. However, the maximum amount paid by this government is still only \$22.50, or 75 per cent of the basic \$30. That \$22.50 is only 56 per cent of the total maximum pension available in British Columbia.

In Alberta there was a supplement of at least \$7, which makes the total maximum pension \$37.

Mr. Fair: It is now \$10.

Mr. Knowles: I heard the interjection of my friends the other day, and I believe they are right; but for the purpose of my argument I was accepting the lower figure which the minister gave. If it is now \$10, the percentage is the same as in British Columbia. Even when it was only a total of \$37, this government's \$22.50 represented only 60 per cent of the amount paid to the pensioners at the maximum.

In Saskatchewan the cash amount available to pensioners is at a maximum of \$35, apart from other services. This government's \$22.50 is only 64 per cent of that total.

In Manitoba there has recently been added a supplement of \$5. I confess that it has certain means tests attached to it, which means that not as many get it as should; but in the case of those who do draw \$35 in Manitoba it is still a fact that \$22.50 is the maximum paid by this government, which is only 64 per cent of the total.