

Pension Act

reasonable understanding. I am sorry the argument has been advanced that there is no hope of coming to any reasonable agreement. It would indicate to me that there was reason to fear we should not come to such an agreement. Personally I think the amendments to the Pension Act are reasonable, I think they are necessary and I do not see any reason why they should not be adopted. I would say however that if no compromise is possible this House cannot do otherwise than accept the amendments of the Senate, because there is a great issue involved. If we do not accept them the bonus lapses, I understand, in September this year.

Mr. BELAND: September 1.

Mr. CALDWELL: This will mean that our pensioners who are getting the full disability pension will only receive \$50 instead of \$75 a month, or \$600 instead of \$900 per year. The royal commission considered it was advisable to extend this bonus for five years. The committee of the House recommended that the bonus be made permanent, as part of the pension. I think the thought in the minds of the royal commission was that there was no question about extending the bonus at the present time. That was indicated in their report. I think there was another thought in their minds, which was that possibly living costs might go down in five years. The reason the bonus was instituted—and I was one of the committee which recommended it—was because the cost of living had gone up, and it was not possible for a totally disabled man to live on \$600 a year. I think the cost of living has gone down very little, if any, since the bonus was instituted, especially in the case of a man not able to help himself. Therefore, if there is no possibility of a compromise with the Upper House on this bill, I think the House must accept the Senate amendment. I would suggest to the government, however, if no compromise is possible, the government should consider very seriously the holding of an election this summer and asking the people of this country to decide whether there is any use in electing members to parliament to pass or amend laws for the government of the country. To my mind electing representatives has come to be more or less of a farce, due to certain conditions which have arisen in the passing of acts in this country, and I would strongly advise the government to hold an election forthwith, of course giving time enough to get the facts before the country, in order to decide who rules this country, whether it is the elected members of parliament, or whether it is a body of men

[Mr. Caldwell.]

who are not responsible to anybody but their God, and possibly not in very close touch with Him.

Mr. SPEAKER: The expression the hon. member has used is a very harsh one, and I would refer the hon. gentleman to rule 19.

Mr. CALDWELL: I hasten at once to withdraw the expression. Possibly my emotions ran away with my better judgment. However, I presume there is no rule of the House to prevent a man from entertaining his own thoughts, if he does not express them.

Mr. JOS. T. SHAW (West Calgary): I rise only for the purpose of saying that it is important that action be taken with a view to securing a compromise in this matter. I do not think that any good purpose can be served by approaching the members of the Senate in a belligerent and hostile attitude, with the threat of an election, for the purpose of—I do not know for what purpose, because I cannot see how an election is going to determine anything other than the membership of this House. We have to change the British North America Act first. I think the committee appointed by this House should have in mind that this is not necessarily a time for belligerency. In the first place, I think it will accomplish little; and in the second place, this House does not need to prorogue at three o'clock.

Mr. JAMES ARTHURS (Parry Sound): I desire to say a word or two in support of the remarks of the hon. member for Calgary. It is most desirable that some compromise should be arrived at. It is true this matter has been before the country, through the Ralston commission and the committee of this House for many months. It has been thoroughly threshed out. Their recommendations were made to the government and legislation was introduced in this House accordingly. I disagree with the hon. member for Victoria and Carleton (Mr. Caldwell), because he has an apprehension that perhaps the Senate was adverse to the government, but I want to point out that the men who practically killed this bill in the Senate—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. ARTHURS: The members of the Upper House—

Mr. LOGAN: Order.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): We do not like the truth sometimes.

Mr. CALDWELL: I will put the hon. gentleman right. I did not refer to any party