

Canada Pension Plan

tion as possible at the resolution stage concerning this amended resolution which deals with the Old Age Security Act.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I should like my first words on this resolution to be words of unqualified endorsement of the action parliament is now taking in the field of old age security. I refer to this action in terms of a general principle, namely our decision that old age security, a pension to all without a means test, should be made available to the people of Canada at age 65. For the moment I am ignoring the five years that it will take, under the terms of this resolution, to implement in full that principle; as I say, for the moment I am thinking of the principle itself, and I regard this action as one of the historic steps taken by the Canadian parliament in the field of old age security.

The minister indulged in a bit of history and perhaps I might do the same, even though some of the dates that I mention have been referred to on previous occasions. I think the first date of significance in this general area as far as the Canadian parliament is concerned was the year 1908, when government annuities were brought into being. The next important year was 1926, when the first old age pensions act was passed, becoming effective in the year 1927. Along the way there were improvements, and along the way other programs were added which are of importance. But I think the next highlight came in the years 1950 and 1951, when as a result of the sittings of a committee on old age security, and as a result of legislation in this house, we removed the means test from the pension at age 70 and established old age security as we now know it.

In my view the step we are now taking is to be classed with these other historic steps in that we are going to make the pension available at age 65. I am not ignoring the remarks the last speaker made about the age of 65, or his question as to why we have come to regard that age in the light we do. But the fact is that it is, roughly speaking, the age of retirement in business and industry, and for too many years now we have left our older people with this gap between the age of 65 and 70, which has been a most difficult period for many of our people to cope with. My correspondence with the people of Canada over the years has been heavy. I think it has been heaviest in the general field of pensions. I have received many sad letters about difficulties in getting

[Mr. Lambert.]

by on the amounts of pension that have been available. I think the saddest mail has been from those individuals who have been in this age bracket between 65 and 70.

My colleagues and I in the New Democratic party are delighted that we are being permitted now to take this step. As I have already indicated, we regret that it will take five years to achieve the full implementation of this principle. We believe that pensions should be payable to all immediately at age 65, and if it were not for citation 250, paragraph 4, of Beauchesne's fourth edition, we would now be moving an amendment to this resolution which would have that effect. Unfortunately we are faced with that citation which tells us that a private member cannot move to alter the fundamental terms of a resolution which has been presented to the house with the Governor General's recommendation.

Mr. Winkler: This is one time the rules are wrong.

Mr. Knowles: If I might indulge for a minute or two longer in the history of this legislation, even though this is a bit personal, I should like to refer to some of the things the minister said about the accomplishments of her party on that side of the house, and to some of her criticisms in respect of the requests which have been forthcoming from members on this side.

During the noon adjournment I went back into some ancient volumes of *Hansard* and I found out that the first time I had the opportunity to move an amendment to a motion to go into supply was back in 1944. I was a young member then, almost as young looking as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare is now, and I sat at that time in the back row. I moved an amendment on that occasion calling for three things to be done in respect of the old age pension, which at that time was \$20 per month payable at age 70. My amendment called for three things. The first was to increase the amount, the second was to remove the means test and the third was to lower the eligible age. I regret to say that the amendment was ruled out of order. I have learned a few things since then and have since been more fortunate in this respect than I was in 1944.

It is some satisfaction, Mr. Chairman, to see that some of these things for which we have contended over the years will now be achieved. We now have the pension increased considerably and we have already got rid of