

when it will be possible to consider the position of those judges who had retired and of those widows, without having to meet the criticism that there are many others just as worthy of sympathetic consideration by this parliament who should be provided for at the same time. For that reason I felt this was not the proper time to attempt to deal with the problem referred to.

The other was dealt with in 1944 because it was an option that was granted and with respect to that it could be felt that it did not impose any serious burden on the treasury. It did not increase the amount of pension which might be payable, through two-thirds to the judge and the other one-third to his consort. It was the same amount and there were the same chances of longevity, so that it did not appear to impose any substantial burden upon the treasury. But this other provision which I should like to be able to recommend to my colleagues just as soon as we can get to it would impose quite a substantial burden upon the treasury, and I do not think it would be the kind of measure that should be recommended to this House at this session, because there are too many other things that have also to receive consideration.

Mr. FLEMING: Does the minister think it necessary to wait and couple those two measures together? As he has said, the extension of the option to those judges who had been retired prior to 1944 would not involve any additional burden upon the dominion treasury. Could it not then be dealt with without waiting to deal with the other question, namely pensions to judges' widows? There are some retired judges who feel—I know the right hon. gentleman is aware of this—that an injustice had been done them in comparison with those who were on the bench when the amendment was passed in 1944. These are men who are on in years. Many of them are anxious that they should make provision for their widows by undertaking to share their pensions with them; and, since it does not involve any additional burden to the treasury, I wonder if it is not a matter that calls for early remedy.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I should not like to do that. I prefer taking them together. To do one would increase the pressure for the other. There are quite a large number of charming ladies who have been left in circumstances which make it difficult for them to provide for their requirements according to the manner in which they had lived previously; and I think they would consider that when anything else is done about this, it should take

them in as well. I should not like to recommend doing one thing without the other. I think it would give them the impression that their case was becoming more and more remote, so that I prefer to have the two things done together. When they are done, they will take care of everything then existing. If one of the retired judges, alive to-day, should die before this is done, leaving a widow, his widow would be in the same class as the other widows to be dealt with or whose cases would come up to be dealt with.

Mr. FLEMING: That would be the intention of the government if it introduced the legislation?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Yes. If legislation is introduced it will apply not only to widows whose husbands died in office but also to the widows of those who had been judges and had retired before their death. So that all the cases would be covered. Of course they are all anxious to have it done just as soon as possible; and the explanation I have given to large numbers of frequent, repeated representations, often from the same persons, has had to be that I did not feel I could ask parliament to deal with these cases while there were many other things that many hon. members would consider even more urgent.

Mr. COLDWELL: If I may say so, I think the Minister of Justice is taking the right attitude. While the question which has been asked regarding pensions to widows of judges appeals to one's sense of appreciation of the position of a judge and to the family that he leaves, nevertheless I think the minister is quite right that at this stage, when people are looking for something better in old age pensions and perhaps something in the way of a national health plan and so on, the masses of the people would expect that the government would do some of these things that have been pressed upon all of us and that many of us have warmly advocated, before singling out the dependents of a certain class of persons who during their earning years have been receiving relatively high remuneration.

Item stands.

Progress reported.

At eleven o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.