

Old Age Pensions

given in the order paper, that matter cannot be brought up as a grievance. However, I understand that this evening the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has not put forward the question of an increase in old age pensions.

The Minister of Finance has raised the point that it is not his understanding that a grievance should embrace the discussion of what actions the government has failed to take. I have May here, 13th edition, but I have not been able to put my finger on the exact paragraph yet. However, it is my recollection that on the motion to go into supply members may air grievances which are limited only by the wording of citation 467 of Beauchesne's third edition. Members are limited with respect to the discussion of matters which relate to a decision of the house at the current session, to any item of the estimates, to resolutions which may be proposed to the committee of ways and means and of which, of course, notice has been given, or to any matters placed on or whereof notice has been given in the order paper.

That was precisely my difficulty last evening with respect to these omnibus amendments. The theory with respect to the latitude given to hon. members on the motion to go into committee of supply is so generous that I did not wish, in any shape or form, to be taxed with wanting to curtail the right to air grievances. I am accustomed to consulting the 15th edition of May and I have not been able to put my finger on the proper reference in the thirteenth edition. In any event, the time is so limited between nine and ten o'clock for the airing of grievances by private members that I would ask the house to take my word for what I have said and allow hon. members to proceed with their grievances.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, there is just one point in the discussion that has been taking place about which I am sorry, and that is that the Minister of Finance has said something which would now block the motion of the hon. member for Vancouver South. This house having taken a decision by a vote on the subamendment moved by the hon. member for Red Deer, I suggest it would make it difficult for the same subject matter to be moved again in a motion by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

My friends to my left will remember that when they moved their subamendment we indicated to them that we were afraid their action would have the effect of blocking any further motions or amendments on the subject of old age pensions as such, and it is precisely for that reason that I was endeavouring to-night to stay within the framework of the

grievance as I stated it, namely that the government is holding this matter before the Canadian people like a carrot until as close to election time as they possibly can, whereas what they should do in a statesmanlike way is make an announcement at the earliest possible date.

I have one other reference, Mr. Speaker, and I shall conclude my remarks. On Wednesday, February 6, as recorded at pages 1014 and 1015 of *Hansard*, I asked the Prime Minister a question concerning something he had said during the course of his recent television appearance on the program "The Nation's Business". I referred in particular to his words that we need to assist "those members of our national family who are too young, too handicapped, too old to look after themselves", and I asked him whether the Canadian people could take that as an assurance that something would be done at this session regarding family allowances, allowances for disabled persons and old age pensioners. The Prime Minister's reply was in these words:

Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. I was referring to existing legislation.

The next exchange is simply this:

Mr. Knowles: Do we take it from what the Prime Minister now says in that negative tone that he is closing the door to action on these matters?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): No, I am not closing the door, but as usual government policy will be announced in the house before it is announced over the radio.

One reason that underlies this whole grievance, Mr. Speaker, is the impression that this television appearance of the Prime Minister gave to the people of Canada. I want to read two or three sentences from what he said so the statement to which I have just referred can be seen in its context. This is taken from the press the day after the Prime Minister made his speech over the television network. He is reported as having said:

... some of our fellow citizens have not been doing as well as we would like to see. We must all do what we can to get those less fortunate—whatever they do—wherever they work—to catch up with the general prosperity. And together, we must, as good neighbours, assist those members of our national family who are too young, too handicapped, too old to look after themselves, or who are temporarily without work . . ."

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that that excellent statement which the Prime Minister made on that occasion led the press to believe that legislation in this field was being forecast; yet the next day or the day after when I asked my question the Prime Minister tried to say that this reference was only to existing legislation. That is all part of the practice