

Old Age Security Act

quickly as possible, if that would accommodate the Minister. If the Minister would agree to that, all he has to do is to send me a note and we will look upon it as kindly as possible.

It is evident that the Minister did not respond.

Mr. Weiner: Mr. Speaker, I am too new to the Chamber, having only been elected on September 4, and I do not know if that is the proper procedure to make offers with respect to very important legislation. I would assume that the House Leaders or the Member responsible would make the offer through the proper channels, rather than making it inadvertently in a speech, as this one was made.

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Spadina, I would simply point out that these matters are discussed across the floor frequently. That is what debate is about.

For example, at this moment the House Leaders for the three Parties are not here, but we still carry on the business. If there were some difficulty about the matter but the Minister or the Government House Leader was interested in taking up the offer, he was certainly free to begin any negotiations he wished. It is clear that he did not wish to do so. For some reason that I have not heard, the Minister wishes to delay the effect of the Bill until September.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to make a comment at this point. Let us place the emphasis where it properly belongs with respect to the statement made by the Member for Beaches (Mr. Young), who is not empowered to speak on behalf of his Party in the first place.

Mr. Benjamin: He is our spokesman.

Mr. Hawkes: Let us re-read what he said:

I am, perhaps, at the point of making the Minister an offer—

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young) is our critic on pensions and is empowered to speak on behalf of our Party and make any offers he wants. He has the support of our caucus for that purpose.

Mr. Hawkes: It is clearly understood in the House that arrangements about unanimous consent are made by House Leaders. House Leaders are empowered to speak on behalf of the Party.

Let us go back to what the Member for Beaches (Mr. Young) said:

I am, perhaps, at the point of making the Minister an offer—

Then he concluded:

If the Minister would agree to that, all he has to do is to send me a note and we will look upon it as kindly as possible.

Who in his right mind would accept that type of invitation in which they want us to make a commitment while perhaps they will make a commitment? It does not come from the two opposition Parties or the independent Member, but simply from a political Party that is well known to be in bed with the other opposition Party on every conceivable occasion. It was

simply a trap for the Government, and I commend the Government for having had the wisdom not to step into that trap. Our Government understands the importance of co-operation and consultation. It understands the importance of reaching acceptable agreements with people.

If that Party is interested in reaching an agreement, the proper process to follow is for the House Leaders to negotiate. We hope that Party will use it and show how genuine they are in wanting the change.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for "Spadeena", otherwise known as Spadina.

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, everybody in Spadina calls it Spadina.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): May I just point out to the Hon. Member for Spadina that in Sherbrooke we call it "Spadeena", but in the circumstances I will respectfully call it Spadina.

Mr. Heap: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now we have two names.

I can only suggest to the Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) that a note could have been sent in which the terms were qualified. The Government could have responded to the suggestion from our spokesman on the matter, our spokesman in the House at the time.

If the Government was worried about 211 Members being trapped by 30 Members—I understand that it may consider us formidable—at least we could have been sent a note.

We are not talking about a question of unanimous consent. It was a question of whether Members would continue to speak. I chose to speak, notwithstanding the request from the government side essentially that we should shut up.

I remember when the Hon. Member was on this side of the House. He certainly thought that the job of the Opposition was to oppose, and he did so vigorously, at great length and very often. Now that he is on the government side he thinks that the job of the Opposition is to shut up. In fact, the job of the opposition is to criticize where necessary, and since our criticisms are not being heard by the Government, I hope they will be heard by the public, especially those who are being deprived by the limitation of this Bill.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief comment on the speech of the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap). It seems that friendly Friday has been deteriorating since the end of Question Period today. I cannot listen to some of the cheap shots this afternoon without making a comment. If the Hon. Member is going to support the legislation, he should not criticize the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and make comments on what he says unless he is quoting directly from a credible source.

The fact is that the Prime Minister has not forgotten the people he used to work with. The House will recall that the settlement at Schefferville was the most generous in Canadian