

Pensions

● (1240)

This, of course, has been an interest of mine for a long time. I made a reference to it in my speech last night. I think the first time I ever felt my interjection on the floor of the House had resulted in something happening was with respect to the widows of veterans of World War I back in about 1943 or 1944, when Ian Mackenzie was the Minister of Pensions and National Health. At that time the widows of non-pensioned veterans of World War I were not covered under anything. They had not been included in the War Veterans Allowance Act, but I was able to persuade the Hon. Ian Mackenzie to obtain an order in council from cabinet to make an ad hoc allowance of probably about \$25 to \$30 per month to such widows, and a few years after that we got them covered under the War Veterans Allowance Act.

The acting minister is part of the process. We are not only improving things for veterans, but we are increasing the recognition of the rights of women. There has been too much tendency in the whole of mankind's history—and I say "mankind" advisedly—for women to get their rights only because of their attachment to men. The more we establish women's rights in their own right, the better it is and I am glad that we are moving in that direction.

We have agreed to put through this bill quickly with one speaker per party. As far as I am concerned, this means the one speech which each of us has made now at second reading and that when we get into committee of the whole there will be no debate. We will have the bill out of here and get it to the Senate very shortly. As the hon. member for St. Catharines emphasized, with this out of the way, the Acting Minister of Veterans Affairs must know that all the jobs are not done. There are some other things which will start to have priority. In the first place, he himself referred to the fact that Bill C-40 of last July included references to the War Veterans Allowance Act and to benefits under that act, and I quote him from this morning, "immediate benefits and future benefits".

I remind the minister that in that part there is another phasing-in process. It is not quite as serious as the phasing-in with respect to widows, but I suggest it is time he start studying that and bring in the full benefits accorded under the War Veterans Allowance Act, and that Bill C-40 be brought into play right away.

I also urge, as the previous speaker did, that he give considerable attention to facilities to speed up the handling of cases by the Canadian Pension Commission. Also I support the proposition that the formula for the rate of pensions paid by the Canadian Pension Commission should be put on a clear basis. It should not wait every three or four years to be adjusted; it should stay in a relationship to the average take-home pay of the five categories of public servants designated eight or nine years ago. If we were able last night to change the indexing formula with respect to certain other things like pay and pensions, we ought to be able to do the same for veterans, and I urge that it be done.

I am getting some signals that if I were to sit down now we would get the bill over to the Senate, get it passed, and get

royal assent today. This is extremely important so that the July 1 effective date has its full meaning. On behalf of my party I give our full endorsement to the immediate passing of Bill C-82.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. Certain remarks were made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) concerning Committee of the Whole stage, but the order made was to refer the bill to the standing committee. Is there unanimous consent to refer the bill to Committee of the Whole?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and, by unanimous consent, the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Ethier in the chair.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the title carry?

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I said that there would be no speeches but I think that Allan Solomon, having appeared for a moment, should be given a round of applause for the work he has done, just in case there is any change before we meet again.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Title agreed to.

Bill reported, bill read the third time and passed.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MOTION RESPECTING SUMMER RECESS

Mr. Pinard moved:

That, when the House adjourns on the day this order is adopted, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, October 14, 1981, provided that at any time prior to that date, if it appears to the satisfaction of Madam Speaker, after consultation with the government, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time, Madam Speaker may give notice that she is so satisfied, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice, and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time; and

That, in the event of Madam Speaker's being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairman of Committees or the Assistant Deputy Chairman of Committees shall act in her stead for all the purposes of this order.

He said: Mr. Speaker, for the information of my colleagues of the opposition, we talked about royal assent earlier and arrangements have been made, since we received formal notice