

Financial Administration

there should be some right of recovery out of other payments made to that person from the consolidated revenue fund. As to the actual practice, it is unlikely that the mother receiving family allowance is going to have any substantial debt due to the crown on which recovery is going to be attempted. I think it is almost as unlikely that there will be many persons at age 70 who will owe substantial debts to the crown. If they have been overpaid through old age pension payments or disability pension payments and things like that, I think that most of the taxpayers of Canada, knowing that these people had obtained too much money out of public funds, would expect the treasury of Canada to try to recover those overpayments out of future payments from the treasury of Canada.

Mr. Wright: I agree with the minister where the overpayment has been as a result of the particular act under which the pension or allowance is being paid. But where it is a debt that has no connection with that act, where it is a debt that has been acquired perhaps fifteen or twenty years previously, and is a debt that is still owing to the crown, I do not think that it should become attachable under this section.

I agree with the parliamentary assistant to the minister that where false statements have been made or where overpayments have been made—even by mistake—to the recipients of the particular pension in question, they should be recoverable; but as to debts that may have been owed to the crown twenty or thirty years previously and are still owing because of the inability of the debtor to meet those debts, when eventually he comes to the age of 70 years and becomes eligible for the old age pension, this provision allows the crown to collect those debts; in fact, it makes it almost compulsory for the crown to do so. I think that the parliamentary assistant to the minister will find that there will be a good many cases where debts have been owed to the crown for a number of years and where now there will be an asset on which the crown can collect. Outside of something that has to do with the act itself, I do not think that these pensions under the Old Age Assistance Act, the Old Age Security Act, the Family Allowances Act

or the Pension Act in connection with pensions to dependents or parents on compassionate grounds, should be attachable for old debts that had no connection whatsoever with the act itself. I think that the Old Age Security Act, the Old Age Assistance Act, the Family Allowances Act and the acts covering pensions paid to dependents of veterans and those paid on compassionate grounds under the Pension Act, should be amended to provide that the pension would not be attachable for those ancient debts that might have been acquired by the citizen during a former period.

Section agreed to.

Sections 96 to 102 inclusive agreed to.

On section 24—*No payment out of C.R.F. without authority from parliament.*

Mr. Adamson: Mr. Chairman, the questions I wanted to ask on section 24 I have asked subsequently on section 63, and they concern the repayment of the funded debt. I therefore have no further objection to section 24 carrying.

Section agreed to.

Schedules A, B, C, D and E agreed to.

On the title.

Mr. Blackmore: Was not the assistant to the minister going to put a statement on the record that was of interest?

Mr. Sinclair: Yes. I have here a statement of the government officers guarantee fund showing the premiums, interest added, total credits, net payments from fund on defalcations and closing balance. As the hon. member for Greenwood says, in view of the large amounts of money which are handled by the civil service of Canada, I think it is quite a tribute to their efficiency and honesty that the loss should be so small. It is a tribute not only to the honesty of the civil service but also, I suggest, to the extremely effective internal audits and other treasury controls over the public moneys that we have all across Canada. I think it would be of interest to have this statement put on the record.

The Chairman: Is it agreed that the statement be put on the record?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.