

Business of the House

ously this ought to be placed before the House in the form of a specific charge. All hon. members know how this has to be done. Certainly it cannot be done indirectly by way of a motion of the type submitted by the hon. member.

I would suggest that nothing would be gained by having a dispute between certain members of the committee and the minister brought to the House for consideration by way of a question of privilege. I might add that this matter was brought to the attention of the House previously under the guise of questions or a motion under Standing Order 43. When the Chair was invited to rule on the matter the Chair suggested at that time, and I do so again today, that this is a matter for consideration by the committee itself.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE****JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

Second report of Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs—Mr. Gervais.

LABOUR, MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION

Second report of Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration—Mr. Portelance.

[Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

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[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**CONSIDERATION OF BILLS INCREASING CERTAIN PENSIONS**

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I wish to say a few words about the business of the House. I have had meetings with the opposition House leaders and there is a general disposition to proceed as quickly as possible with the amendments to the Old Age Security Act and the veterans bill. It is understood that all members want to have these pension increases in the hands of the pensioners as early as possible. I am advised that if these increases are to be in their June cheques and in the hands of the pensioners by the end of June, it would be necessary to have the bill passed by the end of next week. For that reason I am asking that the customary notice be waived and that we begin second reading of the Old Age Security Act amendments today. Because of the time factors affecting the receipt of the pensions, I think hon. members will see the validity of making this special arrangement in this particular case.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to agree that this be done and that these long overdue amendments be now brought in. I would have

[Mr. Speaker.]

preferred to give this consent several months ago. However, there has been one suggestion made which would not in any way impair our proceeding to pass this bill. We were debating Bill C-5 last night and the debate was almost brought to a conclusion. There has been a suggestion that, provided it is the feeling of the House expressed in the form of an order, all questions which need to be put in respect of the second reading of the bill dealing with the Farm Credit Corporation be put within half an hour for the purpose of second reading and sending it to the committee where the committee will hopefully make those changes it so badly needs. We might be able to complete that matter this afternoon before we start on the other bill.

The only other point I should like to make, and I am sure the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) will agree with me, is that we may be in a somewhat of a dilemma and Your Honour may be in a difficult position if during the formal budget debate there is reference to the measures presented by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), specifically to the two bills the President of the Privy Council has now referred to, namely, the bill dealing with veterans pensions and the bill dealing with old age security benefits. If the House gives second reading to these bills, under the provisions and traditions of this House this might normally be an estoppel to hon. members who, in pursuing the budget debate, might like to say a word or two about pensions amendments.

I would hope, therefore, it would be clearly understood that if the debate on these two bills is completed as far as second reading is concerned before we get into the budget debate, this will not prejudice the right of hon. members to deal with these issues during the budget debate despite the fact that the House has indicated its intention to pass these bills. I am sure the President of the Privy Council, who wants to see these matters thoroughly aired, would have no objection to such an understanding.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, in respect of the bills proposing pension increases I must say on behalf of this party that we warmly welcome the conversion which has taken place on the road to Damascus, or perhaps I should say on the road to the election. We are delighted that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner), the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and perhaps the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) have had a change of heart and are prepared to propose these increases to which they were formerly opposed, including the establishment of escalation of the basic old age security pension. Therefore, small as these increases are, we think people should have them as soon as possible.

• (1420)

We are prepared to waive the notice requirement and give first reading to the old age security bill and also to the veterans bill today so they can be printed and proceeded with as soon as possible. We are prepared to give first reading to both of them today and are prepared to proceed later today with second reading of the bill to amend the Old Age Security Act.