

*Old Age Security*

That means, Mr. Chairman, that we are not changing the purpose of the act, we are not changing through this amendment the spirit of this legislation; we do not intend either to give rise to extra expenditures.

Mr. Chairman, that means that this amendment is against clause 1, as a question of principle, namely that at present statistics are prepared by a public body.

The purpose of this amendment is very simple. It is a matter of replacing the federal body by a private one. That is why I refer to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms.

As we do not want to delay the debate, I shall refrain from giving references you know as well as I do, but since the purpose of this amendment is to replace a questionable organization called Statistics Canada, for the purpose of gathering basic statistics for the administration of the act by a private scientific body, so that the interests of Canadians are really respected, it is obvious to us that this amendment is in order.

Another reason for us to disagree with Statistics Canada—and this has nothing to do with procedure—is that if this body reflected more the policy of bilingualism in Canada, we would already be more inclined to look favourably on what it does. But since we are unable to obtain any information from this body or to get in touch with it except in English, we have even less sympathy with it.

Of course, this has nothing to do with procedure, but I should like to urge Your Honour to look favourably on this amendment because it would not result in additional expenditures; we simply want to have the right men in the right places.

[English]

**Mr. Macquarrie:** Mr. Chairman, I have been taken by surprise by this amendment. I am not clear concerning the body which the hon. gentleman mentioned. While this bill is anything but startling in its precision, I believe generally speaking one should strive in legislation for clarity concerning the sort of institutions we have in mind in carrying out a public trust. I wonder whether the hon. gentleman has a definition of this body which could be inserted in the right place in the bill. I do not want to use the amendment as a vehicle for either praising or blaming Statistics Canada, but I am sure it would be helpful to Your Honour and to the committee—it certainly would be to me—if we had a definition of the body to which the hon. member refers so we would know upon whom the responsibility would be placed in this matter.

**Mr. Cafik:** Mr. Chairman, in respect of the amendment presently before the committee, it seems to me it would be difficult for us to support the amendment in view of the fact that there is no such organization in existence which would be able to determine the consumer price index as is done now by Statistics Canada. I should like to point out to members of the committee that it seems to me this bill would be frustrated in its essential purpose, at least temporarily until such a body was set up, at being able to escalate, according to the consumer price index, the benefits to old age pensioners and recipients both under the OAS and GIS on the basis of increases in the cost of living. On that basis alone I would find it difficult to agree to this

[Mr. Fortin.]

amendment. In effect, it would destroy the bill at least in a temporary way until such a body was set up. That is not in any way a comment in respect of Statistics Canada.

In addition to that, we feel that the recommendation by the Governor General which accompanies this bill does not deal with this specific question but, rather, with the question of escalating the OAS and GIS payments; it does not deal specifically with Statistics Canada. For that reason also I respectfully suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the motion before us is out of order.

**The Chairman:** The hon. member for Charlevoix on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Caouette (Charlevoix):** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

**The Chairman:** The hon. member for Charlevoix rises on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Caouette (Charlevoix):** With respect to the discussion going on, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member of the Progressive Conservative Party asked for clarification about the organization suggested by the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau) to replace Statistics Canada. The parliamentary secretary suggests for his part that there are no organizations other than Statistics Canada to compile statistics. So, to clarify the discussion I would like to point out that all national food, clothing, petroleum producing corporations all year round commission statistical surveys from associations of economists in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver and those same firms of statisticians or economists can be referred to by the federal government. We say that Statistics Canada through its formulation, its basic principles, its action or working methods does not produce reliable statistics. That is why we want a private association of firms of economists in existence from which the government could easily commission statistical surveys on the cost of living. If the parliamentary secretary is not aware of that all he has to do is ask, probably the fund raisers of the Liberal party, if big corporations can give him information on their statistical surveys which, in many cases, are a lot more specific than those made by Statistics Canada.

**Mr. Fortin:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

**The Chairman:** The hon. member for Lotbinière rises on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Chairman, on what has been said I would like, in reply to the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) and for your information, to refer to paragraph (2) of citation 199 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms which states:

(2) A motion is not irregular on account of its vagueness.

Supposing that this motion is vague, it is not a reason to rule it inadmissible. Mr. Chairman, it goes without saying that it is the prime responsibility of the government to obtain valuable statistics. We question the work of Statistics Canada. This is why our motion is positive. And citation 198 stipulates that a motion must be positive. This