

Bill No. 77, an act respecting the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway Company of Canada.

A resolution has been referred to the committee in respect to a direct railway outlet from the Peace river country to the Pacific coast. Your committee recommend that 300 copies in English and 100 copies in French of the evidence to be taken by the committee in connection therewith be printed for the use of the committee and of the House of Commons, and that rule 74 be suspended in relation thereto.

He moved:

That, in accordance with recommendation contained in the second report of the select standing committee on railways canals and telegraph lines, 300 copies in English and 100 copies in French of the evidence to be taken by that committee respecting a direct railway outlet from the Peace river country to the Pacific coast, be printed for the use of that committee and of the House of Commons, and that rule 74 be suspended in connection therewith.

Motion agreed to.

OLD AGE PENSIONS

The House resumed, from March 3, consideration in committee of Bill No. 70 respecting old age pensions.—Hon. Mr. Heenan—Mr. Johnston in the chair.

On section 9—Maximum pension \$240.

Mr. CANNON: Before we consider section 9, with leave of the committee we might return to section 8 in order to meet the objection raised by the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens).

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the desire of the committee that we return to clause 8?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Carried.

On section 8—What persons are pensionable.

Mr. CANNON: The hon. member for Vancouver Centre raised certain objections to the wording of paragraph (a):

Is a British subject, or, being a widow, was such before her marriage.

There was quite a discussion about it. Since the point was raised I have had time to examine the law, and chapter 44 of the statutes of 1914 covers the case of an alien woman who marries a British subject as to her status when she becomes a widow. Section 11 reads:

A woman who, having been a British subject, has by or in consequence of her marriage become an alien, shall not, by reason only of the death of her husband, or the dissolution of her marriage, cease to be an alien, and a woman who, having been an alien, has by or in consequence of her marriage become a British subject, shall not, by reason only of the death of her husband, or the dissolution of her marriage, cease to be a British subject.

Therefore the argument which I made last night that the clause as it reads now covers both cases holds good, I submit, but there is no doubt that the phraseology might be improved. My hon. friend from Toronto referred to the interpretation which should be given to the word "such". If the interpretation is to be restricted to the rules of grammar, my hon. friend would be right. I move, Mr. Chairman, that paragraph (a) be amended by inserting after the word "widow" the words "who is not a British subject."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. SPENCER: Referring to paragraph (c), which reads "has resided in Canada for the twenty years immediately preceding the date aforesaid," I would refer to those people who come here from Great Britain say at the age of 58, who in twelve years would be 70, and who would have to sacrifice any right to a pension they might have received from Great Britain. At the same time, under this clause, they would have no right to a pension in Canada until they had reached the age of 78 and completed twenty years' residence in this country. I would ask the minister if there is no way of meeting that situation, so that these people who come here from Great Britain and have been in this country twelve years by the time they reach the age of 70 may receive a pension.

Mr. HEENAN: That has been considered, but we do not want to load the bill up with any more provisions than it had last year. This bill may not be all that we require—and here I am taking the same ground that I took last year, and the same ground that was taken by my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre—but we feel that it is a step in the right direction, and we do not want to do anything to jeopardize its passage through the second chamber. If the bill works any hardship upon any British subjects, there will be time enough to look after that once we get the principle established.

Mr. SMOKE: In connection with the same paragraph of this section, may I cite the case of a person born in this country and who fifteen years ago went to the United States, and then came back here in a couple of years. Under this clause he would be entirely deprived of any benefits under this bill until he had lived here for twenty years after his return from the United States. Surely it is not intended that the bill should not provide for a case of that sort. There ought to be some provision in the bill that exceptional cases of