

Canada Assistance Plan

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to repudiate the suggestion that the effect of this amendment is to kill the bill. It is clearly worded to have the contrary result. If this house accepts the motion, the motion clearly states that the government should give consideration to the introduction of concurrent legislation. In no sense does this motion kill the bill.

If by some technicality it means, Mr. Speaker, that we have to stay here a little longer while the original bill is reintroduced and, in accordance with the amendment, a concurrent piece of legislation is brought in to provide for an old age pension of \$100 a month without a means test or a needs test for all persons 65 years and over, we in this corner of the house—and I think I speak for all members of the house—would be glad to wait here as long as necessary until these measures are brought in; and they should be brought in quickly.

I realize we are now dealing purely with the interpretation of the rules, but in the name of common sense and the ability of parliament to do so, I ask before we recess that we be allowed to deal with the principle which is embodied in the amendment, which deals with a matter of tremendous importance to a very large section of the people of Canada.

● (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. Pickersgill: Could I ask the hon. member for Greenwood a question?

Mr. Brewin: Certainly. I do not know whether I can answer it.

Mr. Pickersgill: Does the hon. gentleman think that if this amendment were ruled in order, and the house accepted it, it would be mandatory upon the government to bring in the concurrent legislation referred to?

Mr. Brewin: Oh no. I do not suggest it would be mandatory that they do so. But I think that if the house passed such a resolution and the government refused to carry out the will of parliament, then it should either resign and make way for another government or reconsider its policy on this matter.

Mr. Gray: May I ask the hon. member a further question? The first line of the amendment contains the words "That Bill No. C-207 be not now read a second time". Can he tell the house what will happen if the amendment is passed? Aside from the balance of the amendment, what would happen to the bill before us?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

[Mr. Brewin.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member for Greenwood wishes to answer the question—

Mr. Brewin: The hon. member is proving himself an apt pupil of those who read only part of a resolution and not the whole thing. Even if this were passed, and the bill was defeated for some technical reason, it would be perfectly simple for the government, if it had the will to do so, to introduce this legislation again and to introduce the legislation contemplated in the resolution. As far as we are concerned we would facilitate this being done expeditiously. So that problem would be dealt with.

Mr. Churchill: We would do the same.

Mr. Speaker: If there are no other contributions to the debate on the point of order, hon. members may wish me at this time to express an opinion on the many interesting arguments which have been advanced.

Since this amendment was moved last evening by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre I have had an opportunity to look at it and, in the same way as other hon. members have done, I have proceeded to study the authorities and the precedents. I thought I had covered every possible argument either for or against the proposition in my study, but I can see, having listened to the opinions expressed today, that there are a number of aspects of this problem which I had not even thought might exist.

I do appreciate the suggestions made by all hon. members, both for or against the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and seconded by Mrs. MacInnis. Perhaps I might put the amendment on record at this time, since we have been considering the point of order for over an hour. It was in the following terms:

That bill No. C-207 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this house the government should give consideration to the immediate introduction of concurrent legislation providing for an old age pension of \$100 a month, without a means or needs test, for all persons 65 years of age and over.

I should mention immediately that one of the arguments considered by several speakers was the suggestion that if this amendment were carried a certain consideration would ensue and the bill would be killed. I had the impression that this was not a relevant argument. I do not think it is part of the procedural argument that if an amendment is accepted something else will follow, and I would