

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970

very clearly in committee that there are a number of anomalies under the War Veterans Allowance Act that can only be corrected under that act. This is not the act to correct them.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, this is no point of privilege. The hon. member is as dead wrong on this as he has been on it all along.

Mr. Woolliams: How is it you are always right?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Bill C-194 does not amend just one statute, it amends 15 or 20. It is an omnibus bill and it amends every statute that the government found it necessary to amend to carry out its purpose. If the government was willing to carry out as its purpose that war veterans would not lose the increase they will get in their retired civil service pension, this is the place to do it. If it is not done here, it will not be done.

I can see the day coming when members of this House will ask questions and complain because war veterans on the allowance are not getting the benefit of the increase in the civil service pension, yet they are saying nothing now. I say, Mr. Speaker, the operation we are going through is full of this kind of thing, where we are doing one thing for pensioners in the civil service generally but doing a special thing for ourselves.

The hon. member for Ottawa West is concerned about the 88 per cent of the people who have contributed under the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act since 1952 but who do not qualify for a pension. Of course, that includes all those who were elected only once or twice and it may even include some who have died and, of course, they do not get it. People coming to the civil service and working only four or five years do not get a pension either, and people who go into industry but do not work the minimum amount of time do not get a pension. Does the hon. member want us to come to the situation that when a person is selected once or twice he is on pay for the rest of his life? If that is what he wants, let him say so. Let us start by calling it a guaranteed annual income. If we do it for ourselves, let us do it for everyone, but let us call it a guaranteed annual income.

Mr. Francis: Mr. Speaker, there again the hon. member knows what I said. I am supporting the measure before this House which

[Mr. Francis.]

says six years; I am not supporting anything else nor am I alleging anything else. For the hon. member to suggest that I am somehow implying that everyone who is elected to Parliament can get a guaranteed income for life is the kind of distortion that is not worthy of the hon. member.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is supporting a scheme under which anybody who gets elected twice, because six years is about that, qualifies for a pension. Oh, yes, and on that basis he will qualify. He was elected once, then defeated, then elected again and if this bill goes through he qualifies. If he is here for only six years, he qualifies for \$3,780 a year for life.

I may have this protestant ethic or viewpoint that was referred to by one of my colleagues; I may look like a person who likes to lie on a bed of nails. I can live frugally, and all the rest of it. Maybe I come from that kind of constituency that is made up mainly of working class people who don't know pensions of that kind. I think that \$3,780 a year after six years of service at whatever age you might be—30, if you please, becomes possible—for the rest of time is a pretty generous deal that we are providing for ourselves with this legislation.

I am sorry I got off into that, because that is not the issue. Whether it is mildly generous, moderately generous or too generous, the issue, as was so well stated earlier today by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), is that we have a bill here in which we are doing one thing for everybody but we have imported into it not only that one thing for ourselves but this special deal. Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is fair and I do not think we should be doing it.

I have more notes, Mr. Speaker, but time is going on and I think during the course of the day we have made our position clear. I said earlier today that some of us know what consistency will call for in respect of this matter. I think we should be concerned as a Parliament as to whether or not we have the right, in face of the austerity and restraint we are preaching, to do this special thing for ourselves which we are not doing for others. I think we should not, and that is why I have presented motion No. 9, to delete all that portion of clause 21 except the portion that would require us to pay one-half of one per cent into the fund for supplementary benefits.