

British North America Act

Stenson
Stewart
Tardif
Temple
Thomas
Thompson
Tremblay
Tucker
Turner
Wahn

Walker
Watson (Assiniboia)
Watson (Châteauguay-
Huntingdon-Laprairie)
Webb
Webster
Weichel
Winch
Winkler
Woolliams—174.

NAYS

Messrs:

Beaulé
Bélangier
Boutin
Dionne
Gauthier
Grégoire

Langlois
Latulippe
Perron
Plourde
Rondeau—11.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the decision of the Chair confirmed.

Mr. Pennell: Mr. Speaker, I was paired. Had I voted I would have voted to sustain your ruling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, other hon. members who have preceded me dwelt on the very unhappy situation relating to amendments to our constitution. I do not intend to speak along those lines, but rather to apply myself directly to the nature of the address itself and to the amendment to the British North America Act which is being proposed.

The purpose of the motion is to permit survivor and disability benefits to be included in the pension legislation which the government has proposed. I cannot quarrel with this purpose. In fact, when I made a critical analysis of the plan during the throne speech debate this was one of the major matters I discussed, and in the past other hon. members have spoken of some of the shortcomings in the Canada pension plan. Therefore, in principle I am in agreement with the need for an amendment to permit survivor and disability benefits to be included.

However, the mere fact that this proposal is now before the house puts very severe doubt on the sincerity of certain members of the government and certain other members in stating that there were survivorship benefits in the former plan. Time and again we raised the criticism that there were no survivor benefits but government speakers rose to say that there were.

The first thing I would point out is that the title of Bill C-75 describes the bill as "an act to establish a comprehensive program

of old age pensions in Canada payable to contributors and survivors." To say the least I think that was misleading, because it was well known there were no survivorship benefits for people who did not come within the old age category.

I would also like to refer to the remarks of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, recorded at page 449 of *Hansard* for March 2, in which he stated there were survivorship benefits. I do not intend to belabour this point but I think this is an appropriate time to draw these remarks to the attention of the house. The hon. member said:

Thus there are benefits for survivors under the Canada pension plan.

A little further down the right hand column he said:

Surely these facts, which are on record, completely debunk any suggestion that there is no survivor benefit under this plan.

I believe, Mr. Speaker that in the anxiety of the government to sell what was obviously a deficient plan to the people of Canada its members were insincere, and I would go so far as to say were misleading the general public.

Mr. Munro: On a point of privilege, the hon. member referred to my speech when I said there were survivorship benefits under the Canada pension plan. I would point out I went into a little further detail than he has mentioned. Surely, before he makes accusations of insincerity, he must have studied the plans and white papers which showed there were always aging survivor benefits under the Canada pension plan. This was always so, and I am sure the hon. member was aware of it. There was never any doubt that a constitutional amendment would be required for survivorship benefits to people who were not aged; I think the hon. member should be more careful when casting slurs on people's characters.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To my mind there is no point of order in what the hon. member for Hamilton East has said. He is simply debating the issue, and he will have an opportunity later to rectify any statements made.

Mr. Munro: On the point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member was not observing the rules of propriety when he said there was insincerity. He is very well aware of what I was referring to when I mentioned survivorship benefits.