

Old Age Security Act

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for the Yukon is rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Nielsen: My question of privilege involves an alteration to *Hansard*. On a previous occasion the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in reply to a question of mine deleted a whole word—either that or his officials did—entirely changing the senses of the answer. On page 2351 of *Hansard* for yesterday a word has been changed which completely alters the senses of what the minister said. On the previous occasion, his answer was in English and that might have been forgiven, but this time he spoke in French and distinctly used the French word “minorité” and it appears in *Hansard* today as “majority”.

It may not have been the minister who altered *Hansard*; it could have been his executive assistant who often reads the blues. But in my view it is a breach of the privileges of members of the House to have this happen. The least the minister could do would be to instruct his helpers not to change the sense of his answers by such blatant alterations.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

WEEKLY STATEMENT

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the government House Leader about the business for the rest of this week and for next week.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, when orders of the day are called we will continue with Bill C-207 which is under a House order that the debate shall end within an hour. Following that, we will take Bill C-208, the Veterans Act, Bill C-211, Election Expenses, Bill C-203, the Representation Commissioner Act, Bill C-7, the Explosives Act and Bill C-191, Wildlife. On Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, I should like to call the budget debate.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact, as has been noted by the Chair and by myself, that between now and the end of June there are only 12 days left for government parliamentary business, would the government House Leader give some indication as soon as he can which bills now on the order paper are, in the opinion of the government, of immediate priority so that he can continue to get the co-operation of the official opposition in advancing discussion of those measures?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the way in which Bill C-207 and Bill C-208 have been dealt with. If priority is required, I would at the moment indicate that Bill C-211 is a priority item, and the foreign takeovers bill would have a high priority as well as the Representation Commissioner bill. All the bills are quite important, but if I had to list them I would do it in that way at the moment.

Mr. Bell: Have you heard from the Senate lately?

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING ESCALATION OF PENSIONS, RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS, INCREASE IN GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

The House resumed from Wednesday, May 17, consideration the motion of Mr. Munro that Bill C-207, to amend the Old Age Security Act, be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, in speaking on third reading of this bill dealing with the rise in the old age security pension of \$2.88 to cover the cost of living increase, I might say that this indicates the government finally has seen the light and realizes the necessity, because of inflation, of guaranteeing some automatic pension increase to those people who are over 65 who are, in some cases, unable to work. In view of the rapid rate of inflation in recent years, it is only just that this be done. The increase in the guaranteed income supplement to \$15 a month is also significant, and is certainly indicated for most people falling into this category.

This action of the government has been denounced in some quarters and it has been suggested by the Quebec government that it is unfair. According to the newspapers, the Premier of Quebec has accused the federal government of arrogance in failing to discuss the old age security pension increases with the provinces. Although the federal government has steadfastly assumed the right to make direct payments to Canadians, I am one who believes that more consultation should take place on the increase in old age pensions, particularly in the guaranteed income supplement area. Provincial governments, under the British North America Act, have had the responsibility for health, welfare and education thrust on them. At the time of Confederation these were minor areas of government responsibility, but they are much larger now.

The advent of shared cost programs has meant an uneven distribution of funds across Canada for various welfare and social programs, and the federal government has often been to blame for forcing the provinces to take on programs that they were not ready for, either administratively or financially. The payment of a universal old age pension to every Canadian regardless of where he lives and regardless of his financial situation, is one thing, but the attempt to give further assistance to those in need by means of the guaranteed income supplement seems to me not to be the best way of providing extra assistance to those who need it. I would regard it as a considerable intrusion into the affairs of the provinces. The most logical thing, it would seem to me, would be for the federal government to confine itself to direct payment on a universal basis to all Canadians, regardless of their financial status, with the provinces providing extra assistance for those who need it.

The old age security pension is, in effect, a type of insurance paid by the citizen through his years of service in the community whereas the guaranteed income supplement falls under the heading of social benefits made