

tion you have placed upon it, custom has made this a proper procedure, and I rest my case on that. If you do not wish to let me speak on that basis I appeal from your ruling.

The CHAIRMAN: Custom cannot overrule a formal standing order. I will simply allow the discussion, by unanimous consent.

Mr. MacINNIS: I am not speaking by unanimous consent. I appeal from your ruling.

Mr. ILSLEY: All I am concerned with, Mr. Chairman, is letting these hon. gentlemen have their say and getting it over with, on any terms they like, because we are taking up quite a bit of time. But if they are going to stand on this point, I think with my colleague from Vancouver Centre that they have the right to discuss the matter here.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): If necessary we can appeal from the ruling. I know the rules of the house fairly well, or I think I do, and I am convinced that under the item of "administration" you can discuss the whole department and everything pertaining to it, regardless of standing order 58 or any other rule.

Mr. STIRLING: May I just observe that during the considerable number of years I have been in this house there have been many instances, perhaps every time the estimates have been under consideration, when the government of the day has consented to the giving of wide latitude in discussing matters, such as old age pensions in this case, on the item of "administration". For the purpose of getting on and having some progress made, and giving each hon. member who desires to do so an opportunity to make a statement on a matter about which he feels deeply, I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member proceed with his statement forthwith.

Mr. ILSLEY: You may be right about this, Mr. Chairman; I do not know. The point has never been raised so sharply before. I did not take any exception to the discussion when it began; I expected it, but you may be right in saying that it has gone on by unanimous consent, year after year. In any event I am quite willing to have it go on under any terms, as long as it goes on.

Mr. COLDWELL: May I suggest to the chairman and the minister that it has been the right of a private member at all times to inquire carefully into any expenditures made by his majesty. That is history, and I contend that the hon. member for Vancouver

East is exercising that right and is going to exercise it, or we will appeal from the ruling of the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I have brought the attention of the committee to the rule of the house, standing order 58. I have also taken note of the practice that has developed in this house. I have stated to the committee my interpretation of the rule. Now I take it that the hon. gentleman has the unanimous consent of the committee to proceed, and, that being so, without reference to my ruling, but stating that I foresee, on account of that precedent, innumerable difficulties in future, I will allow the hon. member to proceed.

Mr. COLDWELL: By right.

Mr. MacINNIS: I am proceeding by right.

The CHAIRMAN: I simply say that he is allowed to proceed.

Mr. CRERAR: Proceed by right, or some other way—but proceed.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): Above all else, proceed.

Mr. MacINNIS: I shall try to expedite the business of the committee. This was the only opportunity I had of drawing this matter to the attention of the committee. I have no desire to hold up the business of the committee by making a lengthy statement. But every hon. member knows the need, and realizes that even at this time the government of Canada can do better than it is doing for our old people. We must realize that the meagre pension of \$20 a month means much less now than it did before the war. Because of the increased cost of living the value of that pension is reduced by at least 15 per cent. Because there has been an even greater increase than that in the cost of foodstuffs, and because of the further fact that pension receipts are spent chiefly on foodstuffs, the reduction in value of the pension in providing subsistence is much greater than is indicated by the general percentage of increase in the cost of living.

I have no doubt there are many hon. members who wish to add their word of approval to what has been said on this point. For that reason I will leave what I have said with the committee. I have high regard and respect for the Minister of Finance. He now knows the situation, and I suggest it is up to members of the committee to impress it still more firmly on the minds of members of the government so that something may be done.

Mr. MacNICOL: I had intended asking the minister a question on this item. I should