

whole, for there are many questions to be asked and answered and under our rules that could not be done with the Speaker in the chair. In my opinion a resolution of this kind should be discussed in committee of the whole. It is the only opportunity that will be afforded hon. members of asking certain questions in connection with it, as, for example, what will be the effect upon the treaty as a whole of what are referred to as "understandings," but which, I think are more properly described as "reservations."

The same may be said with respect to the resolution regarding income tax. Under our procedure there would be no possible method, unless the resolution were sent to a committee of the house, to ask for and receive detailed information which may be important to a clear understanding of the provisions of the agreements.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: As I have stated, the government has no objection to having the resolution discussed in committee if hon. gentlemen opposite so desire. I have thought it advisable to point out what the practice has been, in order not to have the course proposed considered as a precedent with regard to subsequent resolutions of the kind. In the circumstances the resolution might stand until to-morrow.

Motion stands.

OLD AGE PENSIONS ACT

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENT

Hon. CHARLES A. DUNNING (Minister of Finance) moved the second reading of and concurrence in the amendment made by the senate to Bill No. 42, to amend the Old Age Pensions Act.

He said: I think an explanation is necessary before the motion is carried. The amendment was introduced in the senate at the instance of the government after reconsideration of the feature of the bill, as it passed this house, which developed clearly, I think, in the committee stage in answer to questions from my hon. friend from Vancouver North (Mr. MacNeil) relating to the total permissible income of two blind persons married before the passing of this act, before any deduction could be made from the maximum of pension. Further discussion of the matter not only by the government but with those who speak for the blind in these matters resulted in the suggested amendment in the senate, which adds as paragraph (c), subsection 3 of section 8a, the following:

In the case of a person married to a blind person receiving a pension under this section, by the amount of the income of the pensioner in excess of two hundred dollars a year.

That will have the effect of avoiding the doubling up of the incomes for a second time. The result then will be, if this amendment carries, that in the case of two blind persons married to each other before the coming into force of this act, each could receive a pension of \$240 and each would be allowed a maximum permissible income of \$200, so that the maximum total income of the couple before any deduction from the amount of the old age pension would be \$880. In the case of two blind persons married to each other after the coming into force of this act, each could receive a maximum pension of \$120 and each would be allowed a maximum permissible income of \$200, so that the maximum total income of the couple before deduction from pensions would be \$640. This scale maintains that advantage over the ordinary old age pension features which I emphasized on the second reading of the bill and in committee, as being necessary to take care of the extra expense to which blind persons are put by reason of their infirmity.

Before moving concurrence I should also remark on the questions that have been addressed to me by many members and also by correspondents from all parts of Canada as to the date at which pensions to the blind can be actually effected. It is important that we should be clear on the matter. The old age pension law is a joint dominion and provincial undertaking and anything we do here with respect to the federal act must have provincial legislative sanction before it can become operative. In some of the provinces legislation already existing would permit the province by regulation to adopt the provisions of this amendment respecting the blind. In some other provinces, I am advised, legislation will be necessary. The reason I urge the adoption of this amendment to-day, although it was not one of the bills mentioned on Friday night, is that some of the legislatures are in session and those interested desire to move in the matter as quickly as possible. It is difficult to say accurately when the pensions will be actually in force; they may be in force in some provinces before they are in others. Provincial legislation must be enacted if it does not already exist and the necessary regulations agreed to between the dominion and the provinces with respect to administration. I am sure hon. members will appreciate this information because many of them are receiving inquiries.

Motion agreed to; amendment read the second time and concurred in.