

Old Age Security Act

the raising of the amount of the old age security pension and the lowering of the eligible age. I confess, however, I would find it very difficult to argue for the procedural admissibility of the motion they have now made. But the reason I rise to say anything at all is the reference my friend, the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin), made to what has gone on in the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs in respect of this matter.

There is something more which I think he should have said when he was referring to the activities of this committee. For example, he should have pointed out that this same amendment was moved in the standing committee. The chairman of the committee ruled it was out of order because it sought to amend the act rather than the bill. However, the upshot of that ruling and of that discussion was an agreement which I think was unanimous. Certainly the chairman accepted it and members of all parties agreed to it.

The agreement was that when we are dealing with the estimates of the Department of National Health and Welfare we will have a full discussion on the question of lowering the eligible age. The chairman agreed that at that point we would find a way to make a report to the House recommending such a change, if that should be the wish of the whole committee. It seems to me there is procedural questionability about the amendment that the hon. member has put forward. However, I do not think the discussion should end without it being known by the House that in the committee there are plans afoot to make a recommendation to the House in respect of this very question of lowering the eligible age which has the support, in terms of substance, I hope, of the majority of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I thank hon. members for their contributions to this very interesting debate.

[*Translation*]

Again, I must point out to the hon. member that if at first glance I was reluctant to accept the proposed amendment, it is precisely because that amendment goes beyond the scope of the bill now before the House. The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin) complains that during the committee's proceedings, it was not possible, under our Standing Orders, to amend the bill as certain hon. members would have wanted to amend it. I believe the hon. member wants to refer to Standing Order 75 and if I remember correctly, the procedure that applies to committees is the same that is applied in this House, but less rigidly. Therefore I cannot see, when we must base ourselves on the same Standing Orders, how such an amendment can be allowed in this House, where the Standing Orders are applied a little more strictly.

I would respectfully ask the hon. member to read attentively citation 418 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms where it is clearly stated and I quote:

All amendments which may be moved on a second reading of a bill may be moved on the third reading with the restriction that they cannot deal with any matter which is not contained in the bill.

I believe that if the hon. member takes the trouble to look into Bill C-147, it will be difficult for him to find a provision dealing precisely with the amendment now

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

before us. I also refer the hon. member to citation 415(1) of Beauchesne which reads as follows:

When a bill comes for third reading a member may move that it be not now read the third time but that it be referred back to the Committee of the Whole for the purpose of amending it in any particular.

And subsection (2) adds the following:

In the latter case, the whole bill is opened to reconsideration, but in the former case, the committee can only consider the clause or amendments or instructions referred to them.

In the amendment now before us, the hon. member moves that the bill be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the committee. It seems that the hon. member wants to give instructions to the committee for amending the bill according to the motion, and I really cannot see which provision of the bill he wants to amend.

Finally, I must refer to Citation 246(3) of Beauchesne from which I quoted generously in a previous ruling and where, in short, it is stated quite clearly that it is absolutely necessary to obtain a recommendation from His Excellency to introduce a measure that entails the spending public funds.

For all those considerations, I cannot accept the proposed amendment of the hon. member for Champlain.

• (2100)

[*English*]

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, our party wants to see Bill C-147 passed through the House as quickly as possible and I urge upon all members to try to expedite its passage. While several hon. members were apparently rising to participate in the debate, I thought we might be remiss if one or two of us did not become involved in the debate at this time. I must say also at the outset that I and members of my party support the desires and the wishes of the Social Credit party expressed in the amendment that they are trying to move to this bill, and, as one member, I wish there were some way that we could have an amendment of this sort accepted. I believe it reflects the desire of most members of the House to raise the basic pension to \$150 a month and to lower the age of eligibility to 60. I think that was obviously the opinion of members when the committee was studying the bill about two weeks ago. Indeed, even the minister said he wished the age were lowered to 43, if I recollect correctly.

So I do believe that all of us could somehow get together and do some of these things which I am sure the people of this country really want. I think I would be fairly objective if I were to say that in the last few years perhaps the greatest defender of the older people of this country has been the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who has spoken many times on behalf of the senior citizens of this country. I remember very clearly that on March 1 he spoke in the debate and recalled the time when he was first elected to the House in 1942. At that time old age pensions were \$20 a month and he was fighting for an increase to \$30 a month. The government at that time, being a typical Liberal government, compromised and raised the pension by \$5 a month. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said that he rose to his feet and told the House, in essence, that the pension