

Newfoundland

know why in respect of old age pensioners we should find the obstacle so great that two legislative bodies, both supposed to have great powers, could not have managed somehow to give the old age pensioners of Newfoundland their payments on March 31.

Mr. MacInnis: I should like to say one further word. While I have not the legal training of those who have preceded me in the discussion, I think the main obstacle to the payment of the dominion's share of old age pensions as of April 1 is largely a matter of will. I have seen lawyers get around situations of that kind simply by adding the words, "Notwithstanding anything in this act". Once lawyers get at it with a will, there is always a way.

However, there may be some difficulty. I do not see that it would be unfair to any other province in Canada if, for the period from April 1 until the Newfoundland legislature reached a point where it could pass old age pensions legislation, we paid the dominion's share.

I was somewhat concerned with the remarks of the Prime Minister which, if I understood them correctly, indicated that the government had shifted its position from that laid down in the green book proposals of August 1945. The federal government at that time made the proposal to the governments of the provinces that it was prepared to assume pensions for all persons over seventy years of age without a means test at \$30 a month, and for those between 65 and 69 on a fifty-fifty basis with the provinces at \$30 a month, with a means test. Does that offer still stand, so far as the federal government is concerned, or is there some new offer now based upon contributory old age pensions? If that is so, there will have to be a tremendous amount of work done before a contributory basis can be worked out. Indeed, if we are going to work out a contributory basis for old age pensions we will have to go much further than that and work out a contributory basis for an integrated over-all scheme of social security. Has the government given up the idea of old age pensions as set out in the green book of 1945?

Mr. St. Laurent: The government has not given up the idea of the proposal made in the green book of 1945. But there never was any proposal in the green book of 1945 for the payment of old age pensions to all, without means test and without contributions. That does not mean that no one would get a pension until he had contributed enough to provide the capital out of which it would be paid. Because it was shown that, if contributions were established, the amount of contributions being received would suffice to

[Mr. Graydon.]

take care of the amount of pensions being currently paid. And, provided the scheme went on forever, no one would be prejudiced. Those who would receive old age pensions at the age of seventy without having made any contribution at all, or having made only one or two contributions, would get something more as the net benefit than those who would have contributed from the age of sixty to the age of seventy, for example, to be entitled to their old age pension. The calculations show that the contributions being received yearly would take care of the expenditures being made yearly.

Mr. Knowles: Will there be any delay in the payment of family allowances in Newfoundland?

Mr. St. Laurent: Every effort has been made for the pre-registration of all children in Newfoundland, and family allowances will be paid to those who have been registered at the time union becomes effective. If there are any who do not receive them immediately union becomes effective it will be because their children were not registered in the pre-union period.

The hon. member will realize that at this time we have no right to require anyone to register. We are making the facilities for registration available, but as Newfoundland is not a part of Canada we cannot make any regulations applicable to Newfoundland. We merely make the facilities available and say: If you wish to register, these are the forms to use, and if you are registered when union comes into effect you will immediately receive the family allowances; if you are not registered you will receive them after you do register and from the effective date of union. They cannot be paid until the registration has been received and duly checked.

Mr. Knowles: It is possible that those who registered in advance may receive their family allowance cheques in April?

Mr. St. Laurent: Yes.

Mr. Knowles: Those who are late in registering may not get their cheques until May, but I understand they will be retroactive to April 1?

Mr. St. Laurent: They will be retroactive if the registration shows that there was entitlement as of April 1.

Mr. Knowles: It is too bad that we could not find the will to do the same for the old age pensioners.

Mr. St. Laurent: It is too bad, but family allowances are administered by the federal government and old age pensions are not. The province of Newfoundland will have to set up its machinery, As soon as that is done