

The Address—Mr. Drury

permit a question? In the light of the statement he has just made, can he say whether any employees who are 60 or over but not yet 65 have been given notice of separation? If none has yet been given such notice, are such notices contemplated, or has the review of this whole question softened the government's attitude with respect to public servants nearing the retiring age?

Mr. Drury: I hope I made it clear that a softening of attitude was not needed. The hon. member is aware, I think, that under the superannuation legislation public servants earn the right to a pension payable at the age of 60 or after. Those who are separated from the public service at 60 or over qualify for, and will receive, an immediate pension. Those who are separated from the public service earlier—and I myself am in that category—qualify for a pension payable only when they reach the age of 60. This means that a man separated before he reaches the age of 60 does not qualify for an immediate pension. Obviously, he would suffer greater hardship than the man who gets an immediate pension on separation.

The age 60 group was mentioned in the light of the fact that the immediate pension is payable in respect of these people whereas those who have not reached that age have the right to a deferred pension payable at the age of 60.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Is the government aware that with respect to any of these people who are 60 or 61 and who had expected to continue until the age of 65, their plans, their complete future, will be at stake? We are terribly aware of the difficulties facing retired civil servants. In view of the fact that a further problem could be created by retiring these people before they expect to be retired, may I express the hope that the government will continue to review these guidelines, especially the one respecting persons over 60?

Mr. Drury: We are fully aware of the consequences of the interruption of a man's career. The situation in this group, the failure to achieve expectations, is the same for those under the age of 60 as it is for those over 60. In this sense, both groups are in a similar situation. We do not assume that merely because a man has reached the age of 60 he has no further problems or that there are no further problems involved in connection with separation. This is not only understood, but I am sure it will be taken into consideration by

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

heads of departments when designating those who are surplus to requirement.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Two injustices do not add up to a just society.

Mr. Thomas (Moncton): Will the minister accept another short question? He referred to the relocation of employees in other departments of the civil service. I am wondering how this can be achieved. As I understand it, a freeze has been placed on the filling of vacancies in the service. If this is the case, how can these people be relocated?

Mr. Drury: The so-called freeze affects the engagement of new staff from outside the public service until such time as those who are within the public service, but for whom there is no requirement in their present occupation, are first considered. As I mentioned, attrition takes place at the rate of about 25,000 employees a year. In fact, some 25,000 people leave the public service each year because of death, retirement, resignation or dismissal. This means that daily there are vacancies occurring in the service. In the past, we have looked both within the public service and outside to fill these vacancies, but for the time being we shall be looking exclusively within the public service to fill these vacancies—looking at the list of employees who have been declared surplus to requirement in their present posts.

● (12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Douglas A. Hogarth (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, at the outset of my remarks I would like to associate myself with the congratulations that have been extended to the hon. member for Sarnia (Mr. Cullen) and the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Marceau) on their splendid addresses at the opening of this debate. I think there was a comment in *Time* magazine, just after the last election, to the effect that there was nothing that the Canadian people like to do more than to elect a conservative in the guise of a reformer. It is in the light of those remarks that I should like to review some of our progress to date, some of the anticipated progress we are going to make as outlined in the Speech from the Throne, and perhaps I should also say something about our lack of progress.

To begin, let me say that I think that remark in the magazine, to a large extent is wrong. We have been a reform government and have passed, and we anticipate passing,