

PUBLIC SERVICE—SUPERANNUATED FEDERAL  
EMPLOYEES—REQUEST FOR INCREASED  
PENSIONS

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, on October 18, as reported at page 1534 of *Hansard* I put the following question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson):

In view of the minister's long, strong personal record of support for increases in the pensions of retired civil servants, can he say whether this matter is actually under consideration by the government of which he is now a member.

The minister replied that he had nothing to add to the answer he gave a short while ago to a similar question. I pressed him as to whether there would be an announcement about this matter at an early date, and his reply was: "Probably in due course."

I read that extract from page 1534 of *Hansard* for Friday, October 18, but as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gray) must know, because I assume he has done some research into this matter and because I realize he is interested in a personal way, that same kind of exchange can be found on scores of pages of *Hansard* over the past number of years.

Despite the difficulty we face in getting action I rise again tonight to plead with the government to take action on this important matter. I plead with the parliamentary secretary, if he is making the answer to me tonight, not to put us off again with the story that the matter is under consideration. I have been told that for 20 years. The whole house has been told this repeatedly since May 8, 1967, when a joint committee of both houses recommended unanimously that increases be provided for federal superannuates.

I also plead with the parliamentary secretary not to give us the line about inflation, the need to curb expenditure and so on. We know that line very well. But, surely, you don't take this sort of thing out on people who are in the kind of need that faces many of those who are pensioners of the government in various categories.

It is not necessary for me to go over all the arguments we have made from time to time about these employees—that they have a special claim on the government because the government was their employer, and so on. I would remind the parliamentary secretary, I would remind this house and I would remind the country that the issue does not stop here.

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I would remind him that there are others who also have a right to have their pensions increased because the cost of living has gone up and because standards of living have gone up. But surely this is a place where the government ought to start. Surely this is a place where the government cannot plead that it is not in a position to give a lead.

• (10:10 p.m.)

I notice, Mr. Speaker, that almost every time this question is raised in this house, especially if it is raised by someone else, hon. members look at me as if it is my question. I am glad to have it associated with my name, but I am also pleased to note the growing number of members in this house who take the same stand. The Public Service Alliance of Canada put out a release on October 9 indicating that a number of members had written to the Alliance expressing their support for increases in pensions for retired civil servants. I am sure more letters have been written since then, and in that sense it is unfair to indicate these names; but I think it is significant that the people who support the position I am taking include the following Liberal members: the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), the hon. member for Sarnia (Mr. Cullen), the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Kaplan) and the hon. member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet). I have already referred to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance, the hon. member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray). And I see down to my far right is the leader of the rump, the unquestioned leader of the rump tonight, the only one down there, the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault) who stood up the other night and added his support to the proposition that something should be done for these people.

This same release names several Conservative members who have written to indicate their support for increased pensions for retired civil servants, and these include the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Bell), the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale), the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness), the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave), the hon. member for Fundy Royal (Mr. Fairweather), and the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Gundlock).

The release lists about half the members of the New Democratic party, so I need not put their names down because I can speak for all