

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

should be thrown out, not have its allotment doubled. The people of Canada do not want it. Let us go back to free choice and use metric if we want to or Imperial if we want to use that. That would not cost a cent or, at least, it would cost very little. So there is \$89,000 for the book and another \$14 million for the Metric Commission.

Another problem is the provision for 28 more Members of this House. Mr. Speaker, will the people of this country be any better represented with 28 more Members? The elections of 1979 and 1980 were run with the present boundaries, but now those boundaries are to be changed. People will just be confused. Who will pay for all this? Will it be the Government? No, the people will pay. Normally the Boundary Commission receives \$1 million each year to carry out its work and keep everything ready for an election at any time. I do not complain about that but I certainly complain about the cost of changing the boundaries and the advertising inserts that came with some newspapers.

I do not know how much extra all this will cost, but let us take a minimum figure of \$1 million, although it will probably be more like \$5 million or \$9 million. Another \$1 million for the Boundary Commission plus the cost of 28 new Members will add up. I am told it costs the people of Canada \$100,000 for every MP at present, so 28 times \$100,000 means that those new Members will cost us another \$2,800,000. And it is completely unnecessary, Mr. Speaker. Canada does not need them and the House of Commons does not need them.

● (1550)

The Hon. Member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) introduced a Bill in an attempt to bring some common sense and ordinary thinking into the matter, but they threw it out; they would not support it.

The price of milk will rise because we now have to buy jugs of milk in litres. The money for the kids will go down; they will have a reduced amount.

What are they doing to the people of the country? How can Liberal Members support this type of legislation? I just cannot understand it. Let us keep our figures to a minimum so that no one will say that we are being liberal with our figures. We will be conservative with our figures—another million could have been saved.

There is another item to which I could refer concerning the use of the money that the Government has. The Government does not have a very good record. When the Prairie Farm Assistance Act came to an end, there was \$9,060,000 in the fund. The Hon. Member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) cried and cried about this, trying to get some sense put into the system. But what has happened? The money sat there year after year drawing no interest. This was not fair to farmers. The money belonged to them, but they did not even get any interest from it as it sat in the fund for years.

Then I could talk about the trip of Janet Smith to the Riviera.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but his allotted time has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There does not appear to be unanimous consent.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, it is with some hesitation, but also with the support, I believe, of many of my constituents, that I am taking part in this debate on second reading of Bill C-133. I should like to start by providing some background for the debate. I have been called a rebel on this issue, and I assume that it was meant as a negative assessment and not as a word of praise. Mr. Speaker, Bill C-133 which deals with the indexing of pensions of federal public servants is an issue that has provoked considerable response at our offices in the riding and on Parliament Hill, in the form of letters, telephone calls and comments from my constituents and other people who do not necessarily live in Ottawa-Vanier. The House will recall that since 1977, the indexing issue has been raised from time to time. It was given serious consideration in the House in 1978 and 1979, and a report on the subject was tabled at the committee stage, a report that had the unanimous support of all parties, and which, as I thought at the time, made some valid, equitable and very reasonable proposals for resolving the thorny issue of maintaining the purchasing power of the elderly during retirement. Unfortunately, the report died on the Order Paper, elections were held in 1979, the Progressive Conservatives came to power and the whole issue was shelved and not heard of again. Now, in 1982, we are discussing Bill C-133, legislation which is aimed at capping indexation of public servants' pensions.

Mr. Speaker, to get back to the far from praiseworthy term applied by a number of newspapers to my position on this issue, namely, that I am a rebel, I would refer to certain debates reported in *Hansard* in 1978, and I am going to quote some comments by Robert Andras who was President of the Treasury Board at the time. At page 3623 in *Hansard* of March 9, 1978, when Mr. Andras was introducing a Bill concerning indexation of pensions, he explained why he wanted to maintain indexation. I quote, from page 3623:

In the government's view, it is unjust and unfair to allow the rate of inflation to determine arbitrarily the real value of pensions, and that is exactly what happens when pensions are not adjusted for changes in the cost of living.

In short, the principle of maintaining the purchasing value of pensions so that pensioners can maintain their access to the same basket of goods and services is a principle to which the government is committed, and remains committed.

I also want to mention several comments made by the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) at the National Pensions Conference held in March and April of 1981. The Prime