

*Government Orders*

what hard work is all about, those who are not complainers, those who have given us this great country of ours.

Reading through the legislation as proposed, there are a number of good things that deal with their pensions, but simply put, not enough. The vast majority of our senior citizens nowadays still live below the poverty line. A lot of our senior citizens still are deprived of the many good things that other members of our community enjoy. To that extent, I believe that we still have a lot of work to do. We have to do more in order to deal with the question of unfairness.

Having said that, there are some good things in the proposal. I would like to glance through them very quickly. The members of Parliament review question is good. It will put this issue to rest. It will deal with a lot of the concerns that have been raised by those who have legitimate concerns and those who do not have legitimate concerns.

The second issue, which is combining the superannuation and the supplementary benefits for the Public Service pensions account, is a very good move on the part of the government. It ought to be commended on that.

There are other issues in the bill which are good to a large extent, for example, providing for the splitting of pension credits on the breakdown of a marriage or a common law relationship. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the current legislation does not allow for the splitting of pension credits. However, the new legislation would permit the division of a plan member's pension at source. That is not bad, with the exception of the fact that the bill will not make it automatic. If there is a disagreement of some sort, the different parties will still have to go to court. You know, Mr. Speaker, as well as I do how costly our justice system is.

Pension coverage for part-time employees is an excellent move. This is an excellent move. Currently part-timers are not covered. Anybody who works less than 30 hours a week cannot pay into the pension plan.

However, there are those who are on contract, those people who are hired as casuals, and there are thousands of those people in our constituencies, especially here in the national capital region and perhaps other parts of the country. Those people have been working for the government for the past seven or eight years on a contract

basis. They have absolutely no protection whatsoever. To a large extent, while all of them are thankful for the fact they are getting those *ad hoc* positions for a short period of time here and there for up to six months at a time, they have absolutely no protection.

Extending the option of survivor benefits to pensioners who marry after the age of 60 is also a good move. However, one would suggest that we have to look at it a little more closely to make sure it is in compliance with the charter of rights.

Another point in the legislation which is excellent is an early retirement program for correctional services officers. This is a very good initiative and it is supported by members of the plans.

Creating a supplementary death benefit is as well a good move and the government has to be commended for coming forward with it finally. Unfortunately, in a lot of cases when we talk about the legislation and what is in that particular legislation, we do not really talk about what is not in the legislation; in other words, the issues that were not covered by given legislation.

In the case of Bill C-55, I am not sure that this legislation is in compliance with the charter of rights in many aspects of it. I am not sure about the way we manage the plan, if it is really a clear-cut case where you have the government which is the employer managing the plan without the full participation of the employee. Even if there is an indirect participation of the employees in the plan, it is not done in a fashion where it is managed without government interference. In fact, many things that are under the present legislation would make any kinds of changes, any manoeuvring, done through Treasury Board and through the regulatory body rather than being done through the House of Commons. This is the highest court of the land. If the House of Commons introduced and passed legislation it should have at all times the final say in terms of what can happen to different parts and different segments of that legislation.

Future security from inflation is a protection arrangement in terms of indexing. While the bill addresses the issue, there is really no mechanism in place where one would be assured that in future all of those issues are addressed.