

*Time Allocation*

being held pursuant to Standing Order 82, which provides for a procedure to limit debate, and only that.

As far as limiting debate is concerned, during the past few days I have been following the debate in the House quite assiduously, and I was disappointed in not being able to speak to Amendment No. 4 which I myself proposed. It is supposed to come up for debate and will be debated eventually at least I hope so.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, I shall be fairly brief. I must say that by limiting debate, the Government may be perfectly right from a management point of view, since I suspect that after hearing fifty-three Members at the report stage and eight or nine Members today, the Government's patience may be wearing a bit thin. As far as I am concerned, I find it regrettable that it should be necessary to intervene in this way in a debate that I consider very important and which for many of us is also a very difficult one. As for me, I see it as my duty to vote against closure on this bill. I think there are report stage amendments that should be considered. I am thinking more specifically of the debate that should be held on the proposal by the Member for Nepean-Carleton (M. Baker). This motion was regrouped with the one put by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) and reads as follows, and I quote:

That Bill C-133, an Act to amend the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2), be amended in Clause 2, by striking out at page 2 the year 1984 and the figure 275.69 opposite the year 1984.

I would have liked to hear what the Members of the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party would have to say on the effects of this amendment. As far as I know, none of the members has spoken to the amendment proposed by the Member for Nepean-Carleton, which I imagine has the support of the Progressive Conservative Party. I would have liked to hear those comments because I must admit I am a little confused. Upon reading this amendment, I get the impression that it is somewhat of a fence-sitter, and I would have liked to hear some good arguments that would perhaps make me change my mind. Somehow, the motion favours living in sin for one year but not for two years, and I fail to see how the bill's concept can be said to be valid for one year, namely, 1983, but not for the two years provided for in the bill. Mr. Speaker, I realize that there was no time to debate this question and that limiting the debate will probably prevent us from getting an answer. However, perhaps the Member for Nepean-Carleton or other Members in his party will be able to answer these questions—what the amendment exactly means—and perhaps they will be able to give us further clarification in the course of the debate.

Mr. Speaker, the debate on indexation deals with the risks incurred by workers who expect to spend their retirement years in relative comfort. Of course, there are risks involved in indexation, and the major difficulty which remains unsolved is that society cannot agree on the sharing of these risks. Alternatively, Mr. Speaker, after an understanding is reached on risk sharing, there are sometimes in our society human considerations which make a program hard to implement. Inflation is eroding the revenue of people on fixed income, and we

all agree on the need to protect our retired citizens against that thief, inflation. We should reconsider the options related to those much talked about actuarial deficits, look into the rate of contributions made by both the employer and the employees, and seek ways to change the current investment methods of the pension funds. Finally, Mr. Speaker, we should settle once and for all, as the previous speaker has said, the problem of financing and indexing the basic pensions by consolidating, if possible, the Public Service Superannuation Account and the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account.

Before resuming my seat, Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with the argument put forward by many Hon. Members to the effect that Bill C-124 was consequential to Bill C-133. I, for one, strongly reject this argument, for Bill C-133 have absolutely nothing in common with Bill C-124.

• (1710)

[English]

Actively employed public servants, through Bill C-124, which restricts increases to their salaries to 6 per cent and 5 per cent, were asked to accept a limitation of 6 per cent and 5 per cent on their 1983 and 1984 standard of living. Conversely, retired public servants are asked to take a cutback on their pensions which were established on the best six consecutive years of their working years. We all know that the average public servant retired some eight years ago and that he is 70 years old. Limiting indexation to 6.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent in the two coming years will result in a continuing permanent loss of pension income to retired public servants, because the future base on which their indexation will resume, should it happen, will be reduced. God knows that it does not say on the Bill it will happen. I have tried to present an amendment which will make it happen but it was not acceptable to the Chair and had to be withdrawn.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Mine too.

**Mr. Gauthier:** The Hon. Member tried the same thing and it was also withdrawn. I would like to see some confirmation in the Bill that it will die on December 31 of 1984. I hope to get to amendment No. 4 which proposes to do that and nothing else, to make the Bill die on December 31, 1984, so that public servants will know that the program will end in 1984. There is nothing in the Bill that says it will.

As I have mentioned, limiting indexation at 6.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent in the two coming years will result in a continuing permanent loss of pension income. Conforming to the Government restraint program should not entail a permanent loss of income due to the erosion of the base. One method of maintaining that base would have been the method proposed by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) and myself. Public Service pensioners who are on fixed incomes have told the public of Canada that it is unfair, and I believe it is.

When this program terminates, actively employed public servants will have the opportunity to negotiate and catch up on their salaries, while this is not so for those public servants who