

*Retirement Age*

can there be that many veterans receiving the allowance who have enough savings that they need a much larger exemption?

Third, Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that this restriction which prevents veterans from receiving over \$100 in interests without any reduction in their allowance is terrible, but there are other exempt sources of income for these veterans. It would perhaps be appropriate to list the other sources of income which can be exempted. As Hon. Members are aware, any war disability pension paid by the Canadian Forces or the Allied Forces is exempt. The disability care allowance is exempt; so are welfare benefits; so are certain amounts paid to dependent children or on their behalf and occasional earnings of up to \$2,100 for single recipients and \$3,100 for married recipients, interest income up to an amount of \$100, which the Hon. Member wants increased, part of the guaranteed income supplement, the exempt portion of the veterans allowance, any pension or allowance received for a military medal, compensation for war services, as well as capital gains.

Mr. Speaker, a veterans allowance recipient is an individual who has served his country with honour and whose financial future we want to protect. But we cannot at the same time offer similar protection to someone who has enough savings and earns a fair amount of annual interest to be able to do without that allowance. Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of looking into the question of whether an increase might be warranted, say to \$200, perhaps to \$500 or even to \$1,000, but the Hon. Member ought to understand that the whole issue must be reviewed in the wide context of the veterans' allowance legislation. As the Parliamentary Secretary pointed out earlier, the Department is now making an in-depth review of that legislation. The Hon. Member knows that we cannot—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order, please.

**Mr. Laniel:** Mr. Speaker, I would have a lot more to say and, with all due respect, I am sure I could enlighten the Hon. Member for St. Catharines (Mr. Reid).

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order, please. Pursuant to Standing Order 24(2), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Shall all orders listed under Private Members' Public Bills preceding item No. 225 be allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

[English]

## CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

### PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT—AMENDMENT RESPECTING AGE OF RETIREMENT

**Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe)** moved that Bill C-425, respecting the age of retirement, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to have this opportunity to speak on a subject which I have always espoused and supported, not only in this House but in many other places and other areas as well. I am referring to voluntary retirement and the right of every worker or individual, if he or she so chooses, and if he or she is physically able to do so, to work beyond the mandatory retirement age set down by legislation.

I am fully aware of the fact that the issue of mandatory retirement has been discussed previously in this House and that many important points have been brought out. However, I should like to add to the debate by expressing my deep concern over the tremendous waste of human resources resulting from a policy of compulsory retirement, a waste both in terms of the work force and of the Canadian society as a whole.

I am distressed more particularly by the debilitating effect that mandatory retirement can have upon the physical and mental health of individuals. I agree wholeheartedly with U.S. Congressman, Claude Pepper, who said:

Mandatory retirement is an extravagant waste of people. It severs productive men and women from their livelihoods, lowers their sense of self worth, and squanders their talents.

In the past, it has been largely assumed that most people wish to retire at the age 65, and further, that for reasons of physical and mental health, people should retire at that age, and perhaps even before they reach that age. The view that people should normally retire at the age of 65 has been so widespread in our society that it has been embodied in various Government acts and legislation. For instance, the Public Service Superannuation Act sets the retirement age at 65. Then there is the Canadian Human Rights Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, except in the case of the individual who is 65 or over. Apparently the Canadian Human Rights Act does not consider compulsory retirement to be a form of discrimination.

I realize that in our society, with its accent on youth, there is a tendency to underestimate the capabilities of people beyond middle life. However, as far as I know, there is no sound scientific basis for setting retirement age at 65, or even at 70, because most people at 65 are at the peak of their mental powers. They have more experience, they have more a balanced judgment and generally are more persistent, more loyal, more tolerant and patient than their younger co-workers. If they have good health, they are more likely to have a steady work record. Considerable evidence has been amassed indicating that older workers are not necessarily the incompetent, deteriorating deadwood which personnel managers sometimes