

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

Therefore it was my contention that since legislation is to be brought before the house at this session, amending the Public Service Superannuation Act, and if the amendments to be presented at that time include amendments of a general character, then that would be an excellent opportunity to deal with this tremendously important question of raising the pensions of retired civil servants.

I know the answers to this question. I have had them given to me a good many times. They shift a bit. Sometimes it is a case of waiting for the Canada Pension Plan. Sometimes it is a case of waiting for review of the Old Age Security Act. Sometimes it is a case of waiting for the Canada Assistance Plan, and sometimes it is just wait. This is what the retired civil servants have been doing—waiting, waiting, waiting across the years.

Of course the argument is put forward that the pensions these people get are the result of a contractual arrangement and that it is unusual to escalate pensions after they have been put in pay. But that argument does not hold any more, because the government has provided for escalation of pensions under the Old Age Security Act and under the Canada Pension Plan. That the government has put this piece of escalation into effect is a recognition of the fact that we are going to have to get over the notion that pensions, once fixed, are good for all time.

● (10:10 p.m.)

The cost of living keeps changing; the standard of living keeps changing; prices go up; wages and salaries go up. The thought that retired people from age 60 or 65 for the rest of their years must never have an increase in the pension awarded to them is completely out of date. Surely the body which ought to start doing something about this is the federal government. Information has been placed on the record many times, certainly at least once a year in the time I have been here, concerning the pensions which our retired civil servants receive. There are far too many cases where they are low. The

argument today to the effect that perhaps some of them have something else in addition to their pension has nothing to do with the case. It is our business to be a good employer, and just as some other employers have made adjustments to pensions after they have been put in pay, I say this should be done for the retired civil servants. It was done once; it was done by the Conservative government in 1960 or 1961 and there is no reason that it cannot be done again.

I say that the answer of the Prime Minister, that this matter is under continuous consideration, is not good enough. If the answer tonight still is no, the parliamentary secretary might as well stay in his seat. I hope he will indicate instead that the kind of study which is being given to this matter is the kind which will see action taken on this important question of increased pensions for retired civil servants at this session of parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Chrétien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, of course I have not much to add to the remarks made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

I think we gave an adequate answer to that question on January 25, 1966, when the hon. member raised it in the house.

I know that he is very much interested in pensions for all Canadian citizens and, as we said in our reply of January 25, 1966, we are also very much concerned by the situation of pensioners.

However, the government has decided that the matter of pensions for civil servants would be studied in the general context of the pension plan for all the citizens of Canada, and that policy has not changed since then.

The hon. member has only to read the answer given on January 25, 1966, on the same subject.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.15 p.m.