

Pensions

Let me suggest that it might also be advisable to consider allowing public servants to stay in office beyond the age of 65. They should be given the opportunity, the advantage, the freedom to decide for themselves whether or not they will keep on working beyond age 65, although there should be a limit set at 70.

Today, on reaching 70, people have not aged as much as in the past. Statistics prove that the span of life is longer today. Today's worker seems to be stronger or at least more resistant. Could it be that less strain is imposed upon him? I doubt it. At any rate, everyone agrees that today a man of 70 has aged less than was the case 30 or 40 years ago. Obviously, I am not talking about myself, who even remarried a short time ago, but of those who are familiar with statistics. They will certainly admit that I am right in saying that it is easier today for a man to work until he is 70 than it used to be for a man of the same age.

It is necessary, Mr. Speaker, to consider carefully the condition of the man who retired on a pension, say in 1939 or 1940. He had figured on a standard of living based on the value of the dollar at the time of his retirement. But what is the value today of a pension of let us say, \$75 a month, when we think of how much our dollar has depreciated during those 17 years?

I am in favour of this measure for, after all—I do not know if I have the right word to express what I mean—I consider a pension as a retirement salary. A retirement salary is one on which the retired person must count to provide for his own needs and those of his dependents, if he has any. If everybody agrees that a pension is a retirement salary, we should therefore, in the case of pensioned people, consider the salary increase granted to workers who are still employed either in the civil service or in private industry. We should also take into account the difference in salaries between 1940 and 1957, and establish a pension with a proportional rate as high in 1957 as it was in 1939.

There is no shadow of a doubt that the problem facing those who depend solely on their pension is a serious one, and the mover of the present resolution is to be commended, for it is indeed pitiable to find that civil servants who have given the best years of their life to their country are often left in a worse position than their fellow workers employed by private enterprise, as I am told that some private industries have agreed of their own accord to grant a raise in pension

[Mr. Dupuis.]

to those who have retired 15, or 20, or even only 10 years ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I only hope they won't accuse me of—

(Text):

I am going to take my seat before ten o'clock so hon. members cannot accuse me of talking out this resolution. I am not going to ask for the adjournment of the debate. I only wish to underline to my colleagues the fact that I have the right to express myself. I am not going to talk out this motion; I am going to follow the good example given by those who have spoken on this question, and I hope the government will consider what has been said here and that the resolution will be not only taken into consideration by them but that the objective will be put into practice.

Mr. A. M. Nicholson (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that the Minister of Finance—

Mr. Dupuis: Do you want to talk it out?

Mr. Nicholson: —has the opportunity to indicate that he proposes to accept the very kind advice which has been given to him by members in all sections of the house, particularly members in his own party. I think it is obvious that this is an expenditure which would not be inflationary, but which would be economically sound and politically popular.

I wish to thank the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra for placing on the record this afternoon certain of my questions that were answered by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. I am not going to read them; I merely wish to draw attention to the fact that the highest paid pension under the Public Service Superannuation Act is \$875 a month, or \$10,500 a year. That would appear to me quite an ample pension but, Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that there are 5,644 of our fellow Canadians who gave their very best service to this country many years ago, when it was anticipated that the superannuation allowance would be adequate, who are now in the unfortunate position of getting \$21.03 a month. I am sure there is no member in this house who thinks of that figure with any pride. It amounts to around 70 cents a day.

The last time I visited the penitentiary some years ago they told me it costs the tax-