

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

It is a major piece of treachery. It is an act of disdain and contempt for the Canadian people, particularly pensioners. This is why I am so delighted I am here today. I was off on business and I was not able to be here.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: I was not able to be here last week. I am sorry I missed last week because I would have had the chance to speak three or four times to see if I could get anything across to Hon. gentlemen opposite. They are breaking faith. This is trickery. They talk in international affairs about confidence-creating measures; we must have confidence-creating measures. How can the economy ever come back with this kind of confidence-destroying tactic? There is no confidence in the business community. There is no confidence in the investor. They have all been betrayed. Now there is no confidence in the Government by the old age pensioner. There is no confidence in the Government by the person who receives Family Allowance. There is no confidence in the Government by the 1.5 million people who are unemployed.

How can the Government lead us to an economic recovery? It cannot. It can only lead us to further treachery, trickery and skullduggery. They are breakers and enterers. They should be charged with break and entry, destroying the trust and confidence which people normally have in Government. They have broken and entered peoples' minds. They are worse than the criminal who breaks and enters an ordinary home.

I am coming toward the end of my time. I say that I am voting against this legislation. It is uncaring, unheeding, unknowing, unwholesome; it is treacherous and contrary to the program which the people of Canada were promised. I hope to be around when we come marching back to try to restore some of the things Canadians deserve and should never have had removed from them.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with three matters which arose in the debate today. The first one is the question of the motion of the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

Mr. Crosbie: I want a question.

Mr. Gauthier: You do not deserve any questions.

Mr. Crosbie: Why am I being discriminated against? They will not ask me questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) has the floor.

Mr. Gauthier: If I may give good advice to the Hon. Member, he has to be relevant and he has to be non-repetitive. He was not very relevant and he was very repetitive.

Dealing with the motion to hoist or to put off the vote on this motion to six months hence, I regret to tell the House that I cannot support it because I want the Bill to be disposed of today and beaten, if possible. I do not think the realities of the political world will allow that. Therefore I do not see any virtue in putting the hoist on this Bill so that it will be taken up six months hence, souring relations even more with public

servants and making it very difficult for valid consultations to go on with the Bill over their heads.

I would like to join with the Minister and with other Members of the House in trying to make the consultation process work better in pension matters. I say to the Minister that I think there has to be a fundamental review of the issue and that there are several important issues at hand which must be looked at. In the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act and all other pension accounts, there are important technical and fundamental issues which have to be addressed at this time and quickly. To that effect I recommend an approach to the Minister. In light of the statement this morning that we should look at this in the context of national pension reform, and because of the specificity of the matter of Public Service pensions, the Minister should consider setting up a task force—and he should give serious consideration to this without delay—to canvass the views of Public Service pensioners and organizations on the future of the Public Service Superannuation Act, the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act and all the others, respecting benefits, funding, financing, investments, administration, the role of employees and pensioners in determining these matters in future, and the long-term issues which are of concern to the Minister, to many employees and pensioners at this time.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Six months would give him time to set up a task force.

Mr. Gauthier: Of course the members of the task force would have to be credible to employees and pensioner organizations. Such a task force would be given full access to all pension data and records other than confidential policy papers between the Minister and his advisers. It would need staff assistance in carrying out financial and other propositions or projections. Finally, to achieve maximum credibility, I believe that it would be necessary for the report of the task force to be made available to employees, pensioners and their organizations when it is submitted to the Minister. If the Minister follows this course of action, it would enable him to make good on his promise that employees and pensioners should and will be consulted on important long-term pension matters, particularly if he moved to set up such a task force at this time and without delay. Such a task force, as I see it, would parallel basically what the Government is proposing to do by setting up a parliamentary committee to get the opinions of all interested Canadians on its Paper entitled "Better Pensions For Canadians."

● (1640)

My second point is with regard to a statement made this morning and repeated again by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) to the effect that there is no formal agreement with respect to Public Service pensions. He said that the present pension system, and I noted that down, does not form part of any agreement arrived at by collective bargaining.