

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

part which is being followed very closely by many people in the Public Service of Canada today. The bill espouses a new and very important principle, that of voluntary retirement on the part of any employee who has reached the age of 55 and has to his credit not less than 30 years of pensionable service.

● (9:50 p.m.)

It has become clear to me, Mr. Speaker, from the telephone calls and letters I have received in the last few days and weeks that this provision is welcomed and that a number of people are anxious to take advantage of it. Their thinking with regard to the retirement policy has undergone many phases. There was a time when no one thought of retiring at age 55. I suppose in a large number of cases the men and women who are thinking of leaving the public service at that age, after 30 years of contributing to the superannuation scheme, have in mind undertaking another type of activity which will be very useful not only in respect of their mental health but in giving them an opportunity, while they still have the capacity, to do great things and enjoy life to undertake a new kind of career without jeopardizing that which they have built up. I had a call the other day from a gentleman who at 52 years of age had 35 years of pensionable service. He suggested I might consider moving an amendment so that with 35 years of service he could retire at age 52.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we are trying to do now is a good thing. I would not propose at any stage that we try to go beyond the standard which is spelled out. I am aware of a number of very difficult retirement cases. Among the most difficult are those involving contributors to other schemes which have an early retirement age. I think particularly of the armed forces of Canada. I had the case of a gentleman who had retired from the naval service of Canada at age 39. His concern was that he was not permitted under the Superannuation Act to build up many additional years of contribution. He had 20 years of naval service and retired at age 39. He was permitted only to build up another 15 years contribution under the Superannuation Act. He felt this was an injustice. He was willing, capable and, presumably, encouraged by his department to stay on the job and proposed to stay there until at least age 60 if he could improve his pension rights by so doing.

We must bear in mind that in spite of the very good provisions this government has provided for persons who retire, the provisions are still very modest. Persons who retired 15 years ago find they cannot in any way compete with the tremendous increase in the cost of living. I hope that the committee in looking at a number of the technical provisions of part VII will be able to review other cases of hardship which might be brought to their attention in respect of pension schemes. We are anxious to do the right thing; we want to treat our employees fairly. The government of Canada is in this connection breaking new ground and is doing the kind of thing of which I am sure all of us are proud.

I should like to say a word or two about part I of this bill. It creates a Department of the Environment. The gentleman who is to be designated as minister of this

[Mr. Francis.]

department is presently in the House. He will be the lead-off speaker in the debate tomorrow. He will make a statement which I am sure will be welcomed by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), who said he was looking forward to the remarks of the minister who will be responsible for the department of the environment.

I hope that the minister, who will occupy the new building in the sister city of Hull, on the other side of the Macdonald-Cartier bridge, will take an interest in the immediate environment of the national capital region. As a member representing this area, I have felt from time to time that there is a great deal to be done in our own back yard within the national capital region. A great deal could be done by way of a determined attack upon the polluting factors which have so obviously affected the environment of our great national capital.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** There is a job to be done on the Ottawa River.

**Mr. Francis:** That is precisely the first place to start. Assistance must be given to the city of Hull in the development of its primary, secondary and tertiary treatment facilities, and to the city of Ottawa in respect of its secondary and tertiary facilities in order that one of the truly magnificent rivers of this continent might be restored to a degree of the purity it knew in years gone by. The fact is that those of us who live in the capital city know that when the wind blows from the east, the kraft mill at Thurso is changing its process, because there is very obviously air pollution.

The fact is that the sulphur-dioxide droplets that form under certain adverse weather conditions have had their eroding effect upon the very stones of these buildings, as anyone who is familiar with maintenance problems could demonstrate and explain quite clearly. But I am confident there is an aroused community conscience, an aroused awareness of pollution problems as well as a contribution by the words which are commonly heard in day-to-day speech, in every issue of every newspaper, on the television screen and wherever we go. We talk today about ecology, about the biosphere and about pollution. These are words which have come into very recent use in our language.

I am confident the minister who will have these responsibilities is one of the most capable persons who could be chosen for the job. There is no question that he has a job to do. I hope he will look at the problems of air pollution, water pollution and even soil pollution, and that the national capital region will be one of the first places to receive his attention. In that way the cities which have not yet developed within this region, the very necessary treatment of human sewage and control of industrial waste, will have the encouragement, inducement and active support of a ministry of this government which I am sure has a very significant role to play in creating the kind of environment in which we hope to live.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is now ten o'clock.