

*Government Orders*

I am sure that the pension the president of the Privy Council has earned is very substantial.

If we are going to get into double-dipping—and that is more than what the President of the Treasury Board said in a letter that was swallowed by the leader of the NDP about reviewing members' pensions, then get into it for all public servants.

Whether we are talking about Erik Nielsen, Ed Broadbent or Ian Deans, we are talking about Canadians who have served with distinction in the House of Commons, but they have all double-dipped. We have judges in the Federal Court who have double-dipped.

That is completely unacceptable because members get good pensions now. Therefore, they should not be getting pensions and full salaries from jobs taken with the federal government after they retire from here. That is completely wrong.

If there had been a vote on those amendments, it would have given some direction to this unnamed committee which had no criteria set up, no dates for holding hearings. Yet this was the plausible thing that put all members who were nervous about the issue off the issue. We could not even get five members to stand and force a vote on the amendments that were properly moved by members.

I compliment my friend and colleague, the member for Burnaby—Kingsway. He quite properly had amendments to extend pension benefits to the gay community. He has been honest and persistent in that and he has the human rights legislation very much on his side in many ways and there were five members to stand for that. There were five members to stand for a lot of other amendments.

It was a sad commentary on this House of Commons when we had amendments on our own pensions, which were in order, moved by a couple of members of Parliament. With all the discussion and all the nervousness that invoked and all the embarrassment that it may have caused and certainly the scorn that it could create in the public domain, we could not get five timorous mice to stand in their places. They scurried away as though the old Hallowe'en were over.

I give full credit to the government. It knows the rules. I confess, I was not here. I confess my absence, not that it

would have made much of a difference. It would have made a difference in that at least I would have asked a couple of members to stay around.

After Private Members' Hour on Friday at three o'clock, most members know that is the end of the sitting, but not in extended hours. The Speaker was in the Chair doing his duty and it was done very well. That is all I can say about that.

I am sorry, my amendment would have been to recommit that issue along with the whole question of indexation, which is the main question concerning the public servants. It would have recommitted it to the committee. Certainly, a strong vote from the House would have given direction to this vague inquiry that the President of the Treasury Board says he is going to commit someone to.

I say this kindly because I believe the minister is most likely sincere. I believe the parliamentary secretary is sincere. But we deal in realities here in this world of hard knocks in politics and government. The reality is a letter from a minister which is not worth the paper it is written on in a legal sense. It does not bind anybody. That is learned in the first year of the legislation. Do not take anything by print or by word unless it is put in the regulations or in the law.

Who knows who will be the next President of the Treasury Board? Certainly after an election there will be a change and there could be changes even before then. Then we will go through the hocus-pocus again.

It was a great way to take off. I just could not believe listening to the debate here on Monday and having friends on my left praise their leader for accepting this letter and for getting all members off the hook on something that has caused a little concern in the country about the fat cat members and their own pensions. We can always talk about and solve other people's problems but we do not want to touch our own.

That is enough on pensions. I have been forestalled on my motion. I do not know how much more time I have.

The member for Ottawa West, in her review of this bill on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition made one of the better speeches on a complicated bill that I have heard in this House in the years I have been a member. Who knows about pensions? Who knows about indexing, payments and interest? She went through it very well in