

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

has, the retired public servant who has done his duty to his country until recent years at relatively low income scales. Certainly, when you average out the pensions at \$6,900 you are not talking about fat cats who have milked the trough; you are talking about Canadians under the poverty line. They cannot fight back. And when you cap their pension at six and five, they cannot come back when this capping is over and renegotiate.

The Hon. Member earlier spoke about how permanent temporary things become in this House. If the Prime Minister wants Canadians to trust, he should start to practise what he preaches by changing this Bill. Frankly, there is a way out for every Member of Government in the motion which is on the floor at the moment. Many Hon. Members may not know about it. The motion of the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton is a six months' hoist to give Government time to iron out perhaps some of these problems, to study some of the suggestions which have been made, whereby Members, particularly Government Members, would not have to face this dilemma of in effect having their personal conscience and their loyalty to their constituency fly in the face of their loyalty to the Party. In the six months made available we can all talk about what the interpretation may be of that Bill.

Some of us have been in this House before when a Government has lost a tax Bill, and the next day the question was: you have lost a tax Bill, have you lost the confidence of the House? In 1968 in Mr. Pearson's day, in a constitutional parliamentary precedent, the Government which lost the tax Bill had not lost the confidence of the House. And I do not think, even with the losing of Bill C-133 or a six months' hoist to Bill C-133, with all Members present, that the Government would in fact have lost the confidence of the House.

I am glad to see the Government House Leader (Mr. Pinard) here because I know he has been very interested in reform. My hon. colleague was the Vice-Chairman of the committee for reform and, quite frankly, that committee has done some very good work in starting down the road to reform. You can talk about reform all you want in terms of rules and technicalities of procedure, but unless and until we start to reform Hon. Members in their conduct so that we are not always playing the political game and talking rhetorically, which we can all do fairly well, some of these technical reforms will not matter very much. Of course, the one I believe in, which I am not going to repeat, is a fundamental reform which is obviously the reform on confidence motions. If we change that, we will have Members saying what they really believe, really helping their constituents and helping redress this alienation which the public feels for this institution.

That was the essence of the speech from the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier today. He spoke about what he believed in and, interestingly enough, posed the rhetorical question: that he did not feel he was a rebel, running away from principles that he and his Party had believed in for years, mainly because they have been in Government so long, and the inference from what he said was that the import of Bill C-133 is really going against the principle.

Frankly, and I say this seriously, if there was ever a black mark on the social conscience of the Liberal Party it is contained in the implications of Bill C-133. And there are good Liberals, in the Liberal sense of this word, outside of this House who must be squirming at the implications of Bill C-133, and certainly those dead must be turning in their graves. Bill C-133 is in effect breaking trust with retired employees who have served, and served well. The other aspect is that this change was unilateral. It was made with no prior consultation, which is another reason why there is such negative reaction from retired public servants.

I do not have the number of retired public servants in my constituency that some Hon. Members who have spoken in this debate have in their constituencies, but I say seriously that if you want a whipping boy it might be easy to point to those "fat cat retired public servants".

Frankly, it would be easier for me perhaps to vote for this Bill, if I did not honestly believe that this fundamental principle of trust between employer and employee is being violated, and if you violate it once, you can violate it again in any area. And that is what this Government has done in so many ways.

I have in my hand, Mr. Speaker, a season's greeting message from the members of the Federal Superannuates Association of Nova Scotia who, in effect, are concerned about this matter. I see that the clock shows almost six. May I call it six o'clock and continue my remarks at eight o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The Chair thanks the Hon. Member for recognizing the clock. I will now rise until eight o'clock this evening.

At 6 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I had the floor just before six o'clock, and over the dinner hour something happened which some Members here might not think is related to Bill C-133. In listening to the news I heard that the MX missile proposal of President Reagan was defeated in the Senate, and I am very happy about that. Quite frankly, I think the whole concept of dense pack MX missiles, ironically called the Peacekeeper system, is one of the greatest political perversions in the United States, just like the Maginot Line was in France because it was supposed to keep the Germans out of France, but the politicians forgot that the Germans could come through Belgium. It is ironic that it happened today, on December 7, when my young friend, the Hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau), who is not in his seat, perhaps forgot about that day, December 7, 1941, and about preparedness.

The reason this is relevant, Mr. Speaker, is that in the United States' political system a presidential decree, edict, or whatever it is, concerning the MX missile went down to defeat, and neither the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party