

Pensions

the armed forces, the RCMP, as well as in the House of Commons or in the Senate, particularly as this relates to future service in the employment of the government of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, I would have a question to ask him with his permission.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Once I have concluded my remarks which will be very short.

[*English*]

Let me say for the record that this motion has been considered on a number of occasions in the House. The subject matter was considered by the Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates which made recommendations to this House in a unanimous report that was accepted in principle by the government.

Let me refer hon. members to Bill C-52 in so far as it concerns this House. If they will look at clause 91 at page 77, where sections 31 and 33 of the Senate and House of Commons Act are withdrawn, they will note that this will generally cover the problem I have spoken of as it affects this House.

There are only one or two additional things I should like to say about this motion. What the motion proposes is that individuals who have served as members of this House will be able to continue their contributions to the service of Canada without their retirement pensions being impaired in any way. I might add that this will work in the opposite direction in so far as former members of the public service serving in this House are concerned.

Pension matters are very important in today's social context, and it seems to me totally unjust that a member of the public service of Canada, the armed forces, the RCMP, or the public service of a province or perhaps even a municipality, having served 10 or 15 years during which time he acquired a vested pension interest, should not be able to enter this House and merge his pensionable service and entitlement with any entitlement he may earn in this House.

We know that under the pension scheme regulations in this House one has to participate in at least two election campaigns and serve a minimum of six years. What happens to an individual who goes out at the end of four years? All that would happen if we adopted the principle of this motion is that his service, for example, in a provincial government, of 15 years would be combined with his four years in this House so that he could retire with a pension based on the total 19 years. After all, that individual had served in the public service for a total of 19 years so why not give him a pension entitlement based on that length of service? The same thing would apply in respect of service in the armed forces.

I do not see why a man who has served for 20 years in the public service cannot bring that service and his pension entitlement to the House of Commons. The same should apply to an individual who is elected to this House and either voluntarily or involuntarily retires from this place and takes up pensionable employment in the public service of Canada. He should be entitled to add his service years here in the House to his years of public service

[*Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).*]

whether in the service of the government of Canada or of a province. I do not see any difficulty in that regard.

A member of the armed forces can join the public service of Canada and have his armed forces service added to his pensionable service time providing he makes an appropriate election and certain adjustments to contributions are carried out. That individual can then carry on with his pension scheme as though he had always been employed in the public service of Canada.

We saw a breakthrough some years ago which allowed individuals in the public service of Canada to carry their pension entitlements to provincial public service, and vice-versa, providing special adjustments were effected. Why should those at the elective level not be allowed to participate in this portability of pension entitlement? These people have earned the entitlement and should not be placed in a second class category.

What I have outlined in respect of my motion and Bill C-52 should apply to persons in the House of Commons and the Senate who might move back and forth between various public service areas with portable pension entitlements. On the basis of what I have said, and subject to the remarks of the hon. parliamentary secretary, I would be prepared to withdraw my motion.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, in view of the remarks of the hon. member I should like to direct a question to him, and I relate my question specifically to his comments during the debate on Bill C-8. At that time he referred to the fees contemplated for directors of that company as exorbitant. In the event that he was appointed to that Crown corporation would he be ready to accept the exorbitant fee and the pension from this place to which he would be entitled?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I was not referring specifically to directors' fees. I said that they would be executive officers comparable to those levels in the public service of Canada with very generous salaries. The parliamentary secretary should not try to distort my words. His memory may be faulty—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reid: He is a private member.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): In view of the game of musical chairs that takes place over there, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I thought that the hon. member was about to be deposited on the floor, or had been deposited there. The way this government operates there would be much more likelihood of the hon. member being appointed to the positions in question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I am sure he would want to be in the position to take with him whatever pension entitlement he may have earned here. If the hon. member should happen to be named to the bench, as hon. members have been from both sides of the House, there is no reason why he should not take with him whatever pension entitlement he has contributed to and earned here. At the moment his estate can collect a contribution, and that is about all. I think this is total nonsense.