

Canadian Arsenals Limited

view of the fact that there are both Government amendments and Opposition amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): If there is unanimous consent, I will allow it. Is there such unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that there is no unanimous consent.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on report stage of this Bill. I have listened with great attention to the remarks of the Parliamentary Secretary who seemed to be telling us that it was through the good graces and foresight of the Government that we are now amending this Bill so that it will be what has been called more generous to the employees. I am not sure that the phrase "more generous" is an appropriate one under the circumstances. The best way to describe it would be to say that these amendments make it not quite as bad as it used to be.

I challenge the Hon. Member to say that had the Opposition not brought some of these issues to the attention of the committee we would not have seen very many amendments to this legislation. I must say that I am anxiously awaiting the remarks of the Hon. Member for Terrebonne (Mr. Toupin) who represents almost all the people affected by this Bill. I am sure he will speak vividly and forcefully in this particular debate in order to ensure that his constituents get all the benefits they deserve. I must say that I am a little disappointed that we did not hear from him at committee, but perhaps there is still time for that today.

At issue today is not SNC. We are not here to discuss that corporate citizen. We are not here to discuss whether SNC is a good or a bad employer. I think it has made its reputation in the past and we know it to be what most people would consider a good employer. The bad employer is not SNC, it is the Government of Canada. The Government is letting down over 700 of its employees.

During the committee hearings, Members of the committee asked representatives of the Public Service Alliance what they were asking for their employees. These people do not work for the Public Service Alliance, they work for us. They work for the Government of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: They are members.

Mr. Boudria: The Hon. Members across the way say quite correctly that they are members of that alliance but they are our employees. They are our constituents and it is our duty as Members of the House of Commons to take care of their concerns and to act toward them in the best way possible.

The Parliamentary Secretary used the example of an employee who had worked for the Public Service Alliance for

25 years. He described how the 50-30 threshold would be achieved under the amendment brought before us in Motion No. 1. That may be well and good. However, I remind the Parliamentary Secretary, and perhaps he can respond to this later, that even if the employee does have the option to retire under that formula, if the Government plan and the SNC plan are incompatible in terms of retirement age, the employee would want to retire on his pension under the federal plan but will not be able to do so because he will only receive half a pension. The other half that he will be accumulating under the SNC plan will not come to him when he is the same age and therefore he will either be contributing for the last number of years to the workforce and working for almost nothing or he will be withdrawing with much less in the way of a pension because of the fact that the conditions of the two plans are not the same.

There is really only one solution to this dilemma. I submit that that solution is Motion No. 2 which I have put before the House. Motion No. 2 asks for employees of Canadian Arsenals Limited to be given the same benefits that the Government has given to employees of other companies which have been divested in the past.

● (1230)

In particular, I want the same benefits which we as a Parliament gave when the Deer Lodge Hospital and several other institutions were transferred from the federal Government to other jurisdictions. It does not matter whether the other jurisdictions were provincial entities or the private sector. The point is still the same; our employees are being transferred elsewhere.

There are two ways in which this could be achieved. For example, the employees could continue to contribute toward the federal plan, even though they were no longer federal employees, with SNC contributing its share. The Government indicated that that would not be possible because it would create a precedent. I do not agree, but, nevertheless, the Government has taken that position.

The Public Service Alliance has indicated that it is prepared to go along with my Motion No. 2. I urge the Government to accept the motion because it would permit employees, who are soon to be former government employees, to continue to contribute to the Public Service superannuation system in the same manner as employees who are on leave without pay. All existing employees of Canadian Arsenals could then continue contributing until retirement. Of course any other employee or new employee of SNC would not be in the same situation. It would provide a means to accommodate those Government employees, those employees of a Crown corporation. There is a clear and easy way to accomplish that, and I have indicated it in Motion No. 2.

The Minister has indicated that he has some reluctance with the amendment because there would then be two classes of employees at SNC. In his view there would be those employees who had the Government pension plan and those who had a