

Private Members' Business

I did not say that the member's motion said that. I do not want to be unfair. The member asked for an independent review. There is nothing wrong with having that. Actually the government has agreed to it and as I said, it was asked for originally by the member for St. Boniface in any case a year and a half ago.

The only thing I say to the government is that the motion might be redundant. If it is redundant because it is already being done, then surely there is no harm in adopting this motion because it is going to be done anyway. Notwithstanding the hon. member's criticism and my own of the member who proposed this today, we would proceed with it anyway because I do believe that it is going to be done. It was asked for by all three parties and it should be under way.

My only criticism of the government, and here I will join with the member from the New Democrats who proposed the motion, is to say that six months after something was proposed it should at least be under way. The other parties should have been told what the government is planning to do. It should not have been left in abeyance for this amount of time.

Perhaps the government is proceeding with it. At the very least it should have indicated its willingness to proceed to other members so that we would all know and, perhaps, that motion would not have been on the Order Paper today. I trust that would have been the case. However, I do not know.

[*Translation*]

Let me compare a few wages. I phoned the school board in my riding today to find out how much a teacher makes, out of sheer curiosity. This beautiful profession needs to be well paid. The work this profession entails is very important: taking care of our children, educating them, and so on. The maximum rate of pay for a teacher in my riding is \$63,973. That is pretty close to the \$65,000 we make as members of Parliament. A director general earns approximately \$125,000, but not necessarily in my riding in that case, while a school superintendent earns \$93,000 a year. A full professor in a typical university anywhere in this country—I am told—can earn up to \$95,712. I do not deny that their job is important, but we must take into consideration that some of the members of this House do have this background.

Here are a few more examples.

[*English*]

Let me mention a few other professions. I have 1986 salaries. I am using Statistics Canada information which I obtained earlier today. In 1986 an MP's salary was \$56,100. At that time the average veterinarian was making \$59,796; an air traffic controller, \$57,375 and an airline pilot, \$56,622. There is at least one member who is an optometrist, a member across the way. I have the pleasure of sitting on various committees with him. An optometrist made \$71,893; a pharmacist, \$50,260; a civil engineer, \$60,393. I could go on with a variety of other professions in Canada. So much for the salary part.

I am sure that the commission examining salaries will examine those examples as well. We will bring them up to date. The 1991 statistics will be available shortly.

Let us turn to the issue of pensions.

[*Translation*]

At present, parliamentarians have a pension system that does not work like the others with regard to benefits. That is true, but I can assure you it is also very different when it comes to premiums too.

[*English*]

How many people do you know who contribute 10 per cent of their salaries toward premiums? How many people do you know who contribute an extra 1 per cent on top of the 10 per cent in order to have indexation starting at age 60? We pay 11 per cent of our salaries so we can have that benefit. Of course, it is quite a high premium.

Maybe it does not make much difference to a person my age. Maybe it makes even less to a person who is a little bit older, but I say to members of this House that if we are going to attract a 31-year old or a 32-year old woman with children to come here from the other end of the country, we might as well ensure that we make the package in such a way that it does not discriminate against her and prevent her from running.

If we abolished the pensions today and my premiums were all given back with interest, I could work just fine. I do not want to over dramatize. I could probably retire and I would get along. Would that make it right? Would that make it such that it would be attractive for my daughter to run, or for someone else's daughter to run or someone else's son to run? Probably not. This is what we must bear in mind when we do all of this.