

*Supply*

the government caucus there is more support for preservation of the MP pension plan than for respective certain private and voluntary contracts.

In the case of the cancellation of the helicopters the government has fulfilled its contractual obligations. Of course in the case of the cancellation of the Pearson airport, the government is actually trying to block the right of those people involved in that contract to even seek some kind of compensation through a court process. That seems particularly ridiculous when in the case of the MP pensions it is fairly clear from my office's study that if retrospective changes were to be taken to court there would be very little likelihood that MPs would be successful in achieving these gross privileges they had voted themselves in the past.

I cannot entirely explain the government's motivation, but I would repeat once again for the hon. member and for other members across the way that it would be in the interests of all parliamentarians if the government would vote for the motion and proceed on a plan that gave realistic and defensible benefits to members of Parliament.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure this morning to address the House on this opposition motion presented by the member for Beaver River.

The motion says that this House urges the government to replace the current members of Parliament retirement allowance plan with a pension plan that reflects the current norms for private sector pensions with a maximum contribution in accordance with the Income Tax Act.

Perhaps before discussing the content of the motion itself we could spend a moment talking about what brought us to this discussion today. I have a theory and members across are free to disagree with it. I believe it is reasonably easy still, although somewhat less than it was a year ago, to bash anyone in public office. Perhaps that is fair game. We certainly should not be immune to criticism, all of us who have chosen to seek public office or to serve in this very honourable House.

**Miss Grey:** We are not bashing; we are bashees as well.

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** Now we are going to justify it.

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I see I have already provoked a few cat calls from across the way. I also am of the opinion that the mistakes of previous governments, particularly one regime that was turfed out, should not be equated with criticism against the institution itself or those who now serve in it.

I believe firmly in what I call the John Diefenbaker way of looking at it. There is no greater honour for a Canadian than to serve his or her fellow citizens in the highest court in the land,

the Parliament of Canada. I have said this in previous Parliaments and I will say it again in this one.

I came to Parliament Hill on October 25, 1966 as a busboy. I am very proud of the fact that I managed to climb more rungs in the ladder than those who started in the middle of it. I am very fond of that and I am not ashamed of that background. On the contrary, I use it to illustrate what a great country this is when someone can start with such humble beginnings and end up a member of Parliament. In my case I am presently the chief government whip, thanks to the decision of the Prime Minister on September 15.

**Miss Grey:** We are talking about pensions here.

• (1040)

**Mr. Boudria:** The member across the way says she is talking about pensions. I know exactly what she is talking about. She is talking about the compensation offered to MPs, those things that bring us to Parliament and those benefits that are accorded after one leaves. That is exactly what I am talking about as well.

There is a one man band in this country, the David Somerville band. The one man band calls itself the National Citizens' Coalition. It is not national and it is not a citizens' coalition. It has nothing to do with anything of the sort. It is a business operated by one person who puts ads in the newspapers inviting Canadians to give him money. He says he is going to use that money to buy some more newspaper ads to fight the causes he says he is fighting. How much money is that person paid? No one knows. How much money do Canadians give him to fight these causes which he says are legitimate? No one knows that either.

[*Translation*]

Members opposite are saying this is not someone who holds public office. I never said he was. In fact, I made it clear at the beginning of my speech that he had his own business. I did not say he held public office; hon. members opposite should have listened more carefully.

This individual takes advantage of the Canadian people, who are often taken in by his malicious attacks against those who serve in this House, and he puts ads with little pigs in the newspaper, urging people to send them money. That is his way of getting rich, not his way of defending the interests of Canadians. Let us be clear about his agenda.

[*English*]

**Miss Grey:** We are talking about MPs pensions from the inside.

**Mr. Boudria:** The hon. member across is heckling that we are talking about MPs pensions. I am talking about the guy who put the ad in the paper about the MPs pensions, if the member was listening.