

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970

after ten years' service is, to say the least, pretty good; and for us to be doing this at a time of austerity—and this morning in the Railway Committee room we again heard that restraint must be practised—and at a time when we are saying to all other pensioners that they must wait for the white paper on social security, will not help the good name of Parliament. I still resent this being done. We had the chance to vote against this proposal at the conclusion of debate on the report stage. We indicated where we stood, and it is still my view that Parliament is going too far in what it is doing with regard to pensions of Members of Parliament.

I said, however, that I would spare the House some of the steam I have let off over the weekend among my friends. I shall content myself with saying this: Now that we have done this, or will have done it once the bill has been read the third time and considered in the other place—and I do not imagine that will take very long—there is a real obligation resting on us not to let the matter of pensions rest where it now is. I have a four-point program; that does not mean I shall speak ten minutes on each point, for I do not have that much time left. I think we must soon review the Public Service Superannuation Act and all other pension acts similar to it. On Tuesday, March 17, as reported at page 9:6 of Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, No. 9, of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, I proposed a motion which was ruled out of order. I will not repeat the arguments I advanced but I should like to put my proposed motion on the record because I think it spells out what we ought to be doing. The proposal as reported in the committee proceedings, reads as follows:

Mr. Knowles moved,

That this Committee recommend to the House that there be an early reference of the Public Service Superannuation Act, and other similar acts, to an appropriate committee, for the purpose of reviewing such legislation to determine improvements that could be made therein, such review, notwithstanding the generality thereof, to include the level of contributions, the formula for the determination of pensions paid under such legislation, the percentage granted to widows and other dependents, the administration of such plans and the question of their being made subject to collective bargaining.

I find, on reading that proposed motion again, that it really does cover the points that ought to be dealt with in any review of the Public Service Superannuation Act. We did not ask for this last December 19 because the

only thing then before us was the general question of escalation of pensions. Now, because we have opened the act governing our pensions, so to speak, I think we must open these other acts, review them, and look at the various points which have been raised.

I know there is a certain amount of feeling building up in the Public Service against paying this extra half of 1 per cent in contributions for supplemental benefits. I may say that I am not indulging in the privilege of which the opposition sometimes avails itself, namely damning the government on every point. I am not doing that. I am writing the kind of responsible letters we always write on this side, making it clear that by paying this extra money into the fund we are not only providing money for those already retired but we are buying an escalation of future pensions, of the pensions of those who will retire in future. I doubt if you can buy any better form of insurance. As an item off by itself, it is good, and as one who has worked for 25 years trying to improve the pensions of retired civil servants, I am glad to pay the extra \$7.50 a month—and I hope other hon. members are equally glad—to make possible the escalation of their pensions.

I am saying to civil servants who come to me complaining about the extra one half of one per cent they must pay, "I understand how you feel; I understand this is a last straw; but what we really ought to be doing is not zeroing in on that extra half of 1 per cent, but calling for a review of the entire legislation, of the level of contributions generally and the formula under which pensions are determined; of the amount payable to widows, which is 50 per cent of a pension for the widows of civil servants and 60 per cent for our widows; and the big issues you must raise are the matter of administration and the question of pensions being made subject to collective bargaining." I hope this will be done; in fact it must be done.

My motion the other day was ruled out of order. I will not propose it again, since I know I cannot do so at this third reading stage. But I suggest that just because we have obtained this increase for retired public servants we must not assume that the job with respect to pensions is done. All these broader issues must be dealt with, especially in view of what we have done for ourselves. I, therefore, call on the government to take the initiative in seeing to it that the broader question of the operation of the pension plans and pension accounts under which federal employees