

*Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970*

who take the position of Member of Parliament and by that reason lose other opportunities for providing for their retirement. At the same time, they undertake a hazard as to shortness of tenure which does not exist in other occupations.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said that there should have been wider publicity and wider public knowledge of and participation in that question. Perhaps the procedure was wrong and there should have been widespread public hearings on the matter. We all should be more candid about these questions of salary and pension. I must say that what has disturbed me ever since I first became a member, and what was particularly disturbing to me in 1963 when I had been a member for a little more than a year and the House acted to increase our salaries, was the want of candour on the part of many Members of Parliament and many members of the public about the realities of the position taken by Members of Parliament. I do not think that any sensible country can expect good people to come forward from private life and to take responsible positions at a financial sacrifice in terms of day to day salary—a sacrifice to the member and to his family—if he is not receiving high enough emoluments and a fair opportunity in terms of pension. I confess that as a man with a young family I am particularly concerned about survival benefits which would be paid for the benefit of young children. I do not intend to stand up and wring my hands and apologize to anybody for bringing into effect comparable pension benefits to what I would have been entitled to accrue for myself and my family had I remained in private life.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** I want to be understood perfectly clearly, and I am not just directing my remarks to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I am addressing them to wide numbers of people in the Canadian community who, if there is any policy issue with which they disagree, feel they have a licence to make snide remarks about the emoluments or pension provisions that Members of Parliament may be drawing. I am prepared to say here, as well as to my constituents, that if you think you can get someone who is prepared to work for a lesser salary or not to provide for his children in the event of an early demise, then go out and find him and elect him because I am working

here on a basis which is at least competitive with what I might earn in private life.

I, therefore, think that it was reasonable that Dr. Curtis should have been appointed. I must agree that perhaps the government of that day proceeded on a less candid basis than I have and did not recognize that some people in the community at large might try to draw adverse conclusions from the appointment of Dr. Curtis for this particular study. Perhaps they proceeded in a non-public way. Notwithstanding that, I think it was a reasonable course of action. I think it was a good report, and I think the choice of Dr. Curtis in particular was very good.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said he cannot accept the argument that there is anything particular or unique about the position of Members of Parliament that they should be provided for in their retirement. Probably nothing that I can say in this context would provide a better answer for the hon. gentleman than what his former leader, Mr. M. J. Coldwell had to say when the Members of Parliament retirement allowances plan was first brought into effect on June 25, 1952. I refer to *Hansard* of that day when Mr. Coldwell made what was a particularly eloquent, reasonable and responsible statement. He said:

● (12:40 p.m.)

As one of the senior members of the House with some seventeen years' service, I merely wish to state that during that period of time—hon. members will probably know some of the personnel to whom I refer—I have seen men and women who have served the country long and well pass beyond the portals of the parliament buildings after a general election, or forced to retire through ill health, only to return to a condition bordering on relative poverty. I do not think the people of Canada want that to occur in the future.

He continued:

When I have gone to my constituency or have been talking to people elsewhere in Canada I have taken the trouble to say privately that such a scheme was being discussed by the members of the House, and I have not found any citizen, who has given any consideration to the matter and to the welfare of the membership of the House of Commons and of the country, who has uttered one word against a scheme of this description.

I am prepared to adopt that statement. I am confident all fair-minded Canadians would show that same attitude now, and it is for that reason that I, as the minister responsible for putting this bill through, have no hesitation in saying on behalf of my colleagues and the government that we should put it through at this time.