

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

tiresome view of history that he seems to have. I believe there are limits to these extensions, generally a couple of minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect to the Hon. Member, when the House gives unanimous consent for the extension of an Hon. Member's remarks, the Chair is not aware of any procedure in the rule book by which a limit can be placed on the time.

Mr. Hopkins: I appreciate the remarks fully, Mr. Speaker.

After several meetings of the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, this Bill was returned to the House without amendment. This simply means that with the exception of the 6.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent change, the Government wants the Bill to remain in its original state.

I realize that the Minister in charge of the Treasury Board has a tough row to hoe in piloting this legislation through the House, but as he knows, I have talked with him on several occasions because I am one of those Members who has many people in my constituency who are affected by this Bill and they do not fall in the upper income brackets. For this reason, I still have great reservations about this Bill and I have had considerable discussions with my colleagues on this matter.

Therefore, it is with regret that I state now that I cannot support Bill C-133.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopkins: I have arrived at this decision without malice, without any ill feelings, but certainly in all seriousness and sincerity. I want to thank Hon. Members for their patience.

Hon. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words with regard to the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act, particularly after listening to some of my pinko friends to my far left who keep making these disparaging remarks about the Conservative Party. If they keep saying things like that, they will not be at five points in the Gallup polls, but they will be lucky if they have one point in the Gallup polls.

Mr. Deans: The Gallup poll is not necessarily a measure of the truth.

Mr. Paproski: While I am speaking I wish they were not talking about polls. There are a few Members over there who feel that they know what they are talking about, but when I came here at 11 o'clock this morning and listened to some of the nonsense, I could not believe they would make some of those ridiculous remarks in this Chamber after seeing the Gallup poll over the weekend.

The Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) recalled history during his remarks when he said that the Conservative Party was going to fire 60,000 civil servants. That is a ridiculous remark. We have gone through that routine and we would never have taken such action. It is fine for the Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan) to say that, but we did not even have the opportunity to look at it, much less listen to such trash as that the Conservative Party was going to

eliminate 60,000 top-notch civil servants in this country. I cannot believe anyone would even think of something like that.

I am surprised at this heartless Government's proposal to implement its six and five program on the backs of pensioners in this country, particularly civil servants. I cannot believe it would stoop so low at this time and take away the pension that civil service pensioners in this country have contributed to over the last few years. The Government is now telling them that it does not have enough money and pensioners will have to settle for a six and five agreement. It is breaking an agreement which it made with the pensioners in the civil service of this country. I suggest that this heartless Government is scraping the bottom of the barrel. I find it ridiculous that I must rise on January 24, 1983 to debate such a Bill as C-133.

I would like to repeat the remarks made by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie), as they appear at page 22018 of *Hansard* on January 20, 1983. At that time he said:

The Conservative Party has steadfastly supported Public Service pensioners in their fight to defeat a Bill which takes \$165 million away from pensioners, a segment which is often least able to defend its rights and protect its standard of living. The Conservative Party is well aware that public employees pay 7.5 per cent of their salary to support their pension plan. The private sector employee contributions seldom exceed 5 per cent and are frequently less.

Benefits paid from the plan to date have been more heavily financed by employees than by their employer. Of \$1,360 million paid out between October, 1981, and September, 1982, employees contributed \$735 million compared to the Government's 625 million.

The Conservative Government of 1979-80 was able to trim \$500 million from the federal budget without any income penalties to retired civil servants or senior citizens in general. Approximately \$445 million would be paid out of benefits this year, according to the Treasury Board, and \$420 million will come out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, with only \$25 million covered by the contributions made by pensioners when they were employed. This is due to the fact that, while the plan was only implemented in 1979, the benefits are extended to all retired public servants whether or not they contributed to the fund.

As time goes on, the drain on the CRF will diminish and the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account will pay a larger share of the benefits.

He went on to say:

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The total cost of indexing the pension was approximately 4.5 per cent of the payroll from the regular public servants last year. Pensions for the Armed Forces and some other groups are administered separately.

There is a paper figure of \$15.5 billion in the Public Service Superannuation Account. The present employees' contribution rate of 1 per cent salary to the SRBA provides for only a 1.5 per cent inflation rate in the future, according to the Treasury Board.

An actuarial analysis claims that the total surplus of \$15.5 billion in the superannuation account is sufficient to meet future benefit payments and the accrued interest on this account, especially if it were invested at a high rate of interest, would be more than adequate to cover the cost of pension indexation. Records show that the public service employees have contributed more to the pension than their employer. I suggest that the Government-employer contributions through the PSSA and SRBA be investigated to determine if they have been adequate.

That was part of the speech of my friend, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine, who plainly said it in four or five paragraphs.