

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-54, to amend the Public Service Superannuation Act.

Bill read first time.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

Hon. Peter Bosa: With leave, now.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Daniel Riley: Honourable senators, on a point of order, a great deal of study and work has been undertaken by the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications. We have a pretty full schedule today and if we could take a few minutes to consider that report—it is Order No. 5—it would relieve a lot of us of the tension of having to sit and wait for a chance to get the report before our peers to see whether or not they accept it.

● (1430)

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I do not believe that the report is on the Order Paper for approval but, rather, for consideration. I spoke to Senator Langlois, and I should have mentioned it to Senator Riley, and told him that since legislation normally takes precedence, we agreed we would proceed with the legislation and as soon as we get a chance we will deal with that report.

Senator Riley: The honourable senator says that legislation takes precedence. Here is something that members on both sides of the Senate have worked hard on for a number of months. Are we just going to wait for prorogation and walk away from this work over which we laboured for so long?

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I was not suggesting that. I guess Senator Riley did not hear what I had to say.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Bosa: Honourable senators, the proposed bill amends the Public Service Superannuation Act, which provides for pension benefits for federal public servants. The amendments are designed to remedy the past and future superannuation status of employees of members of Parliament. The amendment applies also to the employees of the Speakers' offices of both houses, government leaders of both houses and leaders of the opposition of both houses and the staff of the official residence and other similar employees. The bill provides as well that coverage will be extended to all present and future employees of members of Parliament and other categories named by regulation from the date the bill comes into force.

This amendment is necessitated by the fact that it was believed that the act covered these categories of employees that I have mentioned but, upon examination by law officers of the Crown, it was discovered that it did not. These amendments fulfil that objective.

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): The explanation is so clear that I cannot find anything to add.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

THIRD READING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

Senator Bosa moved, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(b), that the bill be read the third time now.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.

VIA RAIL CANADA INC.

CONSIDERATION OF INTERIM REPORT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE—DEBATE CONCLUDED

On the order:

Resuming the debate on the consideration of the Second Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications entitled: "Interim Report—Rail Passenger Services in Canada—Are We on the Right Track?", tabled in the Senate on 26th June, 1984—(*Honourable Senator Macdonald.*)

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, Senator Riley has pointed out that there are senators who wish to speak to this order. Perhaps we could have it called. It stands in the name of Senator Macdonald.

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): I have no objection but I would like to know whether we are going to receive other bills from the House of Commons. It seems to me that at 2.45 p.m. we should not be expecting to deal with other legislation today.

Senator Frith: I agree. However, I cannot be over there and here at the same time.

Senator Flynn: Usually, when it is necessary, it seems that your lines of communication are well established.

Hon. John M. Macdonald: Honourable senators, even though our time today is somewhat limited, I would not want the Senate to adjourn without making some reference to the Interim Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications which is entitled "Are We on the Right Track?" This is a report of a study into the national rail passenger service provided to Canadians by VIA Rail Canada. It is not my intention to speak at any length on the contents of the report but I would like to draw your attention to page two, where, under the heading "Should VIA Rail Exist?" It reads:

The title of this report is not intended to be facetious. It reflects the Committee's concern about the future of