

Supplementary Retirement Benefits

and this situation has been prevailing for at least two decades.

The solutions that our governments have adopted since that time have always been the same: they have never succeeded in slowing down the increases in prices, they have always caused further depreciation of the dollar so that the Canadian consumer still continues to have difficulties in making his budget meet both ends. What is the reason for such a mad rise in the cost of living? The reason is that this government has failed to strike at the root of the evil. The government is facing a crisis like the one in the thirties, the difference being that instead of a price collapse we are witnessing a price explosion which has the same effect on the people as well as on savings.

Not long ago, people used to save money so as to provide for a happy retirement, secure from a loss of income at an advanced age. That concept is rapidly vanishing with the loss of the dollar's purchasing power.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, in the annual news letter published by the Canadian Bank of Commerce, one can find very interesting figures on the economic changes in Canada, especially with respect to the purchasing power of the Canadian dollar. On the basis of a 100 cents per dollar in 1961, the dollar value in 1962 was 98.8 and in 1971, 75 only. That means that within 10 years the dollar lost at least 25 per cent of its value.

So the person who saved \$1,000 in 1961 had only \$750 in 1971. Therefore, that runaway inflation robs the people who tried to save money, who deprived themselves of certain things during their working years to save money to provide for a more prosperous retirement. The price rise deprives them of their savings and there is the lack of incentives to save.

Contributions to a pension fund, either in private enterprise or in the public service feel the repercussions of the same situation. Some people who work for companies, if they are numerous enough, join forces to ensure a relatively late retirement, still too late given the production facilities we now have. But when retirement time comes, they find that the money they deprived themselves of during 30, 35 or 40 years of work has lost its value. It does not ensure them the retirement conditions they had anticipated.

As a result, Bill C-220 which is before us tends to rectify this situation by pegging the pensions of some categories of public servants so that these pensions increase at the same rate as the continuing rise in the cost of living. But no provision in the legislation will prevent prices from increasing, so that the pensioner is no better off than before. He will always be in the same situation and since the fiscal system is so designed that the taxpayer is taxed according to a percentage of income and that sales tax is established according to a percentage of prices, it ensures that the higher the prices, the higher the taxes from the three levels of government so that the workman, the labourer or the pensioner has to face higher and higher taxes.

Then the situation which will prevail for the retired we want to relieve through Bill C-220 will be one where their incomes will be a little higher.

[Mr. Laprise.]

Since these are taxable incomes, they will have more to pay in taxes and they will not be any better off after having obtained this pension increase and prices will keep on increasing for them as well as for all others.

In view of this situation, Mr. Speaker, people must try and remain at work longer, even though the whole of the economy could do without their services at an earlier age than before. Their needs are growing and the value of the dollar is decreasing. History records the following, and I quote the *Labour Gazette* of November 1970:

The life expectancy in Ancient Greece was 18 years. One hundred years ago, in the western world, it reached perhaps 30-odd years. Today, for the whole population of the world, it stands at 60 for one out of 14 persons. In the USSR, this proportion is 1 over 11; in North America and Europe, one over seven.

But, progress in hygiene, dietetics and related fields have extended life expectancy. Lately, they have even greatly improved it. It is nonetheless obvious that age creates great difficulties for workers because, on the labour market, the age at which a man or woman becomes known as an "aged worker" is decreasing instead of increasing as could be expected in the light of improved fitness and health among middle-aged people.

There is a saying that living to a ripe old age does not matter as much as remaining young longer. And I feel, Mr. Speaker, that thanks to the progress of hygiene and medical science, we have managed to remain young longer so that as people are growing older, the scope of possible employment is narrowing. Senior citizens must often accept jobs that young people turn down because they are relatively badly paid or not so well considered socially.

So, Mr. Speaker, the aged people now find themselves more than ever in a difficult situation. Workers who enjoy a steady job in a firm to whom they have belonged for a great number of years can expect to remain with that employer until age 65. Some will even keep their jobs until they are 70. I know some such workers in my constituency. However, the situation is not the same for those who do not enjoy such stable employment. For the latter, landing a job at 50 or 55 becomes very difficult; they have almost no means and they must wait until they reach the age when they are entitled to receive the old age security pension, which is now fixed at 65.

Mr. Speaker, this bill features a more direct approach to lowering the retirement age of public servants; in my opinion, that benefit should be extended to all classes of society and at least those who so wish should be allowed to go on retirement as early as 60 in the public service and the private enterprise as well. That should perhaps not force them to go on retirement when they reach 60, but at least those who so wish should have the possibility of withdrawing from the active work force with the assurance that they will receive a sufficiently high income to allow them to lead a decent life.

With such a provision, Mr. Speaker, those who have worked for 30, 35, 40 or even 45 years could have access to retirement and should benefit from those things they have contributed to create during their active working life, and I believe that they deserve it.

In the northern hemisphere, in America and particularly in Canada, people are known for their guts and their willingness to spare no effort when needed.

Mr. Speaker, Canada should be more respectful towards these people at the time of their retirement and ensure