

stage all Members of Parliament will look clearly at their responsibility. In a small business, the employer's word is his bond. We have stated clearly that pensions will be indexed and not trampled on. That is in legislation. We have said to them that when they retire, they will receive a pension and that if inflation escalates, they will still have the same purchasing power from the day they retire until the day they die.

People have planned their lives around this principle of indexation of pensions. We cannot break that trust.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate in the debate on Bill C-133 although, as other Members have said, the subject matter does cause concern. The Hon. Member who just concluded echoed in very real terms the fundamental issue.

Before getting into what I want to say about this Bill, I want, without any hesitation or equivocation whatsoever, to pay a heartfelt compliment to the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) who spoke earlier this afternoon. It was one of the most constructive, reasoned and parliamentary speeches that I have had the pleasure of hearing for some time. After listening to the tone and timbre of that speech, I must say that it has affected what I intend to say today.

I was going to go further with this trust. I was going to refer to the classic article by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in *Cité Libre* where he chewed out Liberals as docile sheep. There were many other interesting epitaphs in that article. There has been the tremendous flip-flop with regard to nuclear arms and the acquisition of Bomarc. Admittedly, that was in 1963 and the Prime Minister was not a Member of the House at that time. The article talked about spineless Members who go through the charade in this House of speaking for and against Bills, not worrying too much about conviction or principle.

This is an issue that one could talk about in a facetious way, but I will not be facetious. The issue in Bill C-133 contains many complexities with regard to pension funds. This is one place where I do not want to be confused with the facts. Frankly, I do not understand the shell game regarding the differences between one pension plan and another. I do not know which one is over-funded and which one is under-funded. I do not know where the surplus is. For years there has been an ongoing debate about what has happened to the contributions of federal public servants, RCMP and Defence employees. In effect it goes into an account, some goes into the national account and the Government pays out.

When it comes to the complexities of pension funds, Alice in Wonderland would be as confused today as she was at the Mad Hatter's tea party.

What stood out today was the contribution by the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier. He researched the subject and spoke very carefully in a concerned way about his personal dilemma of trying to rationalize loyalty to the Party and the principle which he feels could be violated if the Bill came to a vote in its present form.

The most interesting part of the Hon. Member's speech was at the end. He proposed certain changes by which he and other

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Members might avoid the dilemma which so often hits Members. He very eloquently expressed that when he said that when you have a personal dilemma between what your conscience tells you to do and what your constituents would like and there is a Party label on an issue, you are supposed to vote the Party line.

That Hon. Member's contribution was one of the more interesting ones. There have been contributions by other concerned Members, in tremendously marked contrast with some of the speeches made by other concerned Members as to how they would wiggle out of the dilemma they now face.

There have been contributions by Members who spoke outside the House about their personal views on Bill C-133, how they do not intend to support the Bill in its present form. They have stated this at public meetings and so on. However, when the debate began yesterday—and I was here yesterday and today—some Members from the Government side, and I will not name each one, created an amusing situation. The mental gymnastics they went through of trying to rationalize the conflict they are in would make a professional acrobat seem like a piker. They moved around and hopped around the issue, which was squarely faced by the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier.

I said do not confuse me with the facts because, as the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields) said, the issue is the fundamental principle of trust. I find it most ironic that we are talking about this type of Bill where trust is the fundamental issue. I will not get involved in all the facts and figures but I can mention a few. As my hon. friend, the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) said so eloquently yesterday in trying to meet the canard, we are not talking about the "fat cat" who can fight inflation. We are talking about an economic group who are really on the low part of the totem pole, with an average income from these pensions of \$6,900. Yet, because of show, cosmetic effect and propaganda, these retired pensioners from the federal Public Service are supposed to carry their weight, even though so many of them carried their weight by receiving low incomes for so many of the years, let alone the fact that they have made a contribution to their pension since the Act was changed a few years ago and feel very much that there is a contract which binds the Government as a trustee not to meddle with these funds.

● (1750)

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) appeared on television, and what was his fundamental message? What he tried to preach to the people of Canada was trust. He said, "Trust me, trust the Government, trust Canadians". I find it fantastically ironic that the Prime Minister on that day was asking Canadians who were overdrawn at the bank to trust the Government, farmers to trust bank managers, all kinds of Canadians to trust each other in this new euphoria of trust. Yet, here today when he should be practising what he is preaching, his Government would not trust the most loyal Canadians which Government