

*Government Orders*

I think we all know that people are living longer now, they are healthier longer and they are active longer. Life goes on, and people do get remarried. A person came before us whose wife had died when he was somewhat younger. He married again after the age of 60 and expects to live a long and happy life with his second wife, but she will not get any survivor's pension when he dies. He is worried and concerned about that because it is pretty difficult when on a pension to provide a second pension for a second spouse.

I want to talk about part-time employees. The government has claimed that one of the major victories of this bill is that it would allow part-time employees to contribute to the pension plan. It does and that is important. It is important for a lot of women who work for the Public Service and choose to work part-time for a portion or all of their careers because they like to balance their work with their family responsibilities. They may work part-time for a short period after they have been on maternity leave, or for a longer period as they help their children get established.

Yes, this bill does allow, in a very limited way, part-timers to be included in the pension plan.

• (1610)

If the member for Ottawa—Vanier were to enter the Public Service at the age of 60 he could contribute for service in the private sector back to the time when he was 18 years old and he entered the labour force. He could then have a full pension when he retired. However, part-timers are not going to be able to do that. They are only going to be able to go back a limited number of years.

What right do we have to say that the work of part-timers is less worthy than the work of the member for Ottawa—Vanier if he were to enter the Public Service and to say that they do not have the right to go back to the beginning of their working careers and contribute for all their part-time work because it is deemed to be less valuable and less worthy? That is straight discrimination.

It is even worse than that. The bill says that unless a person was contributing to the pension plan the day this bill is passed they cannot contribute for part-time service. In other words, the vast majority of the part-timers now in the Public Service will not be able to take advantage of this despite the glorious announcements by the minister and the government.

Once again duplicity and deception, trying to pull the wool over people's eyes, seem to be the way this government operates. Give me one good reason why somebody who is working full time today and contributing to the pension plan should be able to contribute for their part-time service in the past or in the future but somebody who is working part time today, even though they may have contributed for ten years to the pension plan, cannot contribute for their part-time service. How can that possibly be fair?

The parliamentary secretary himself said that it is mostly women who are part-time workers. Why does he want to continue to discriminate against mostly women?

While the member for Ottawa—Vanier could enter the Public Service and decide 10 years from now to buy back his service back to 1940, part-time employees have only a year to decide that they want to buy back their service.

As I said in my speech on second reading, even when the government tries to do something a little bit good it does a very little bit and it tries not to go too far.

This concerns the issue of trust and honesty with people. The government said clearly that issues about the management of the pension fund would be left to a complete study and review that would be made in consultation with the employees and with the pensioners. Yet in this bill it has failed to set up any kind of management board that would give employees any stake in the management of their own money.

Six months after the minister's announcement not one step has been taken to meet with those pensioners, to meet with representatives of the employees and talk about how that review is being done. After waiting seven years, since 1985, through successive presidents of Treasury Board, for a promised review is it any wonder the employees and pensioners do not really believe that a review is going to happen now, any more than it has happened in the past?

On the other hand the government, having promised that review, has used this legislation which it said did other things to try to shoehorn in a complete takeover of the rules by which the pension fund is managed: how much is contributed, how much in benefits are paid, whether indexing is paid, how much the government contributes, what the employees have to pay. The government has tried to take all this over in this bill.