

Adjournment Debate

though full consideration was still being given to the appropriateness of the appointment.

When the error was realized, the Minister's spokesman immediately telephoned Dr. Franklin, explained the mix-up and apologized for any embarrassment that might have been caused to her. Dr. Franklin said she understood completely and accepted the apology.

Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker, and as will be obvious to all Hon. Members, there is nothing more complicated in it than a matter which involved human error and human understanding of that error.

Mr. Waddell: Lies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier).

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE—PENSIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION. (B)
ENQUIRY IF PENSIONERS WERE REPRESENTED DURING
NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, at the request of a number of public service pensioners, on May 15, 1986 I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) . . .

[English]

Mr. Waddell: Those are lies.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I do not suppose it would be parliamentary for me to call—so I will not need to now. I would suggest that the remark made by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) is not appropriate and perhaps should be withdrawn.

Mr. Waddell: I will not withdraw it. They are lying. They are not telling the truth. The appointment was—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order. Just to make things clear for both Hon. Members, at this time I do not think the House is actually sitting. Technically we are on an Adjournment Debate—

Mr. Prud'homme: No, no.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):—which causes a great deal of difficulty for the Chair at this time.

Mr. Prud'homme: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): I would, therefore, suggest that the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Communications (Mr. Edwards) bring up this matter at an appropriate time tomorrow. It will probably solve that dilemma.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, just on that same point before I start, I do not take exception to what you have said, but the House is sitting at this time. We are on Adjournment Motion.

I hope you will not take the time off the seven minutes I am entitled to in addressing the subject matter at hand.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the question I raised in the House on May 15, 1986, when I asked the President of the Treasury Board whether an agreement had been concluded with respect to public service pensions.

The Minister answered that a document had been submitted to Cabinet and that discussions with the unions on the final document would be completed in a matter of days.

I will be in a position, he said—this was only a month ago, on May 15—to report to the House before the end of the session.

In a supplementary, I also asked the Minister whether pensioners had been involved in the negotiations and if so, at what level.

The Minister confirmed that pensioners were represented on the advisory committee and that a representative of the association knew about the negotiations and the progress made to date.

That was nearly a month ago, and the Minister has yet to announce in the House his Government's position on this vital issue.

As we know, the House of Commons will adjourn in a matter of days, and everyone, especially our pensioners, is anxious to know the Government's position on this particular issue.

Mr. Agius, a retired pensioner who works for the Association of Federal Retirees, got in touch with my office recently and asked me to intervene again so that the decision might be announced before the House adjourns later this month. Since Mr. Agius belongs to an association which was present and is anxious to know what is going on, I am seriously asking the Government what its answer will be, and may we seriously expect its response to this problem which is of concern to all of us. Federal employees and retired public servants want to know what changes will be made to their pension plan. Will full indexation be granted or maintained? Will the Government keep its promise? Will the Government re-adjust the pension base to offset the harmful impact of Bill C-133, the 6 and 5 per cent imposed some time ago?

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was strongly opposed to the deindexation of pensions, and I still feel the same way today. But this Government has promised to restore full indexation. I expect a positive response from this Government. After waiting for over a year, my patience and the patience of pensioners have been severely tried. God knows we are waiting patiently, but we are also waiting for this Government to take position on this question. Can the Minister, through his Parliamentary Secretary, tell the House and pensioners this evening that the Government has made a decision and will announce the terms of the agreement, that we will know exactly where we stand with respect to this important matter?