

What was the answer of the then Minister of Finance? I quote from the same page of *Hansard*:

—the Hon. Member referred to the full pensions which are being received and will be received by retired public servants. Obviously there is no intention to affect the pension rights of retired public servants.

I repeat that: "... there is no intention to affect the pension rights of retired public servants." The Minister went on to say that "what is intended is to cap the indexation". The Minister obviously considers that part of the indexation is not part of the pension. But when a pensioner receives his money, he feels the whole amount is his pension. He needs it all to make both ends meet. The Minister is simply grasping at straws when he says the indexation is completely different from the pension. They are one and the same thing.

The Minister continues his answer at page 19086 of *Hansard*, and I quote:

Public servants will obviously receive increases in subsequent years, but the increases will be 6 per cent and 5 per cent. The impact, of course, of that capping of indexation can be minimized, and will undoubtedly be minimized as we make progress toward the 6 per cent target for inflation.

Again, the Minister is using what we call rationalization. We used to do that, Mr. Speaker, in mathematics. If you have an irregular item with which to deal, then you try to rationalize; you dispose of that irrational quantity by rationalizing. That is exactly what is being done here. The Government is trying to dispose of the information with which it is going to index the pensions. This Bill proves I was correct at that time and the then Minister of Finance was not.

The Minister continues his answer at the same page of *Hansard* as follows:

Obviously that authority will be sought from Parliament by way of legislation in order to achieve the objectives of the Government.

And here and now is the legislation which he mentioned at that time. My reply to him was:

Changing the law might make it legally right, but it will not make it morally right. This is actually a doublecross of people who worked from 30 years to 50 years to build up pensions and who are not now in the \$30,000 bracket which the Minister mentioned but are having a hard time making both ends meet; and the minister will now take some of that away from them.

My supplementary question again dealt with the funding of indexing. I said:

—will this not really make every public servant of the federal government today wary of the fact that they are now contributing toward pensions and make them worry about the future when some future government may suddenly cut their pensions in half? This is not playing the game with former employees. The act makes present employees wary of this particular thing. I suggest to the minister that this is confiscation of something that does not belong to the government. Is not the index fund already able to carry full indexing?

The Minister replied:

I am not quite sure what the question was because I did not hear the peroration of the Hon. Member. However, I would tell him that I do not believe that public servants will be wary of this action because I think that retired public servants will understand the reasons for this change, and the reasons why a sacrifice is asked of them. If the Hon. Member has read some newspapers he will have noticed that a number of retired public servants were quite prepared to accept this policy and not accept the rather defeatist attitude of the Hon. Member.

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

I would remind the Hon. Member that while the pensions of the public servants are indexed and will continue to be indexed, the pensions of most retired persons from the private sector are not indexed at all.

Again, that is rationalization. In the private sector, if any individual paid part of his wage towards indexing, no employer in this country would have the gall to reduce the indexing after the man retired. No court would permit an employer to do that. The Government is doing something which a private industry just would not be permitted to do. These people contributed to this fund. They have a right to it. It is not the Government's money; the Government should get that into its head. It has no authority to handle this money except as set out in the legislation which was put on the books when an agreement was made with those who contributed.

I would like to deal with the fund briefly. For instance, the public service superannuation fund on March 31, 1981, as mentioned yesterday, was \$4.7 billion. The Canadian Armed Forces superannuation fund was \$9.327 billion, or altogether a little over \$14 billion. But the pensioners themselves, in their own literature, say it is altogether different. They say the public service superannuation account had a credit balance at the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 1981, of almost \$13 billion. Then they put in brackets, to be exact, \$12,705,719.

The Member for Churchill said yesterday he had been waiting for an answer to a question as to how much was actually in the fund. He has been waiting for over a year and still the answer is not supplied. On July 8 I wrote a letter to the then Minister of Finance because I wanted that information also and thought the fastest way to get it was to send a letter to the Minister of Finance directly instead of putting a question on the Order Paper and waiting month after month to receive an answer. I wrote to the Minister on July 8, 1982, the day after I asked him the question how much was in these funds. I asked him what was the balance as of March 31, 1982? What portion of the amount was earnings through interest? What portion of the amount was contributed by the employer? What authority is there for the Government to restrict the indexing of these pensions? What use is being made of the unused portions of the funds collected from the public servants and retired public servants, and what is happening to the fund now? I have not even had an answer. I might just as well have put the question on the Order Paper.

I thought I was going the fastest route. The Hon. Member for Churchill did not get an answer for over a year. I did not get an answer to my letter of July 8, 1982. What is wrong? Are we not entitled to know the exact amount of money in these funds? Are we not entitled to know the exact amount of interest which has accrued in these funds? Why are we not permitted to know what constitutes each fund? Which fund includes public servants? Which one includes the RCMP? Which one includes retired Armed Forces personnel?

Mr. Speaker, this is public information and I think everyone is entitled to know what use is being made of this fund. The Government has this fund sitting there, the \$12 billion or \$25 billion, whichever way you look at it, the two together or the one. That is a lot of money. The superannuates have said that