

*Government Orders*

Yet it is a pension which the law for years has recognized that they have earned and have contributed to. In 1986, this Parliament agreed that in the case of Canada pensions, the right to a split in the pension contributions should be recognized. Now, belatedly, we are recognizing that in the case of military and other public sector pensions.

We are recognizing that in the case of a marriage breakdown, where the courts of the provincial and territorial levels have recognized the contribution, as invariably they will now do, or a separation agreement that takes that contribution into account, the minister is obliged to recognize it and to split the pension according to the contribution made during the course of the marriage.

I do not know what it is about the government that when it begins to do something right, it only does it half right. In this case, it has encumbered the pension splitting with all kinds of unnecessary difficulties. We are going to see over the months ahead case after case of unfairness because this government has simply not listened to those who have come before it and raised specific questions about the complexity of this bill.

The government has listened to the officials in Treasury Board and it has not listened to those who have lived with the problem. Amendment after amendment has been moved. The hon. member for Kootenay East has worked very very hard on this bill. Members in the Liberal Caucus have also worked on this bill. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has introduced a private members' bill on this issue and has spoken across the length and breadth of this country on this issue. The government has not listened to a series of very practical improvements that could have been made to make this bill more fair.

For example, there will those who have separation agreements or court orders that pre-date this bill. Because no pension splitting was possible, they may not have included pension split in the separation agreement or had it included in the court order. If they cannot persuade their ex-spouse to change the separation agreement or if they are not allowed to go back to a court because of the passage of time and the issue is closed, they will not have what this Parliament says they have earned, which is a fair share of the pension.

It is all because the government has refused to listen. In committee it accepted a handful of amendments. Basically, it even said to one of its own ministers: "Go see Treasury Board. If you can talk Treasury Board into it then we will do it".

It is an interesting commentary on how the arteries begin closing when a government stays in office too long. This government has been in office for eight years.

**Mr. Edwards:** Just getting started.

**Mr. Brewin:** That is what the people of Canada are terrified about. The hon. member says that they are just getting started. Let me say to the hon. parliamentary secretary that Parliament ought to be a place where when there is a complicated bill like this, a thick bill with section after section, 159 pages of very detailed changes in pension legislation, or when members of the opposition and some members of the government themselves, including the hon. member for Don Valley East, have gone to the trouble, after consultation with Canadians who have taken an interest to this bill, to produce amendments, it is an arrogant and thoughtless government that will not stand up and at least give the Canadian people a moment's explanation as to the difficulty of the amendment. The government should explain why it cannot accept the amendments.

• (1820)

I think the reason the government did not stand up and try to defend its reasons for turning down the amendments is because it could not. It did not understand the amendments. It did not take the trouble to try to understand the amendments.

**Mr. Kempling:** We accepted 28.

**Mr. Brewin:** Out of more than 150 amendments the government says it accepted 28. That means there were over 100 amendments the government did not accept. Not once did the government do the Canadian people the courtesy of explaining its reasons for not accepting even a single one of those amendments, either in committee or at report stage.

I submit again that it is because the government members responsible for this bill simply did not understand the amendments. They did not take the trouble to understand whether or not the amendments should be introduced.