

to examine the document which happens to be a three-page statement.

Mr. Speaker, if the Opposition, if Hon. Members opposite feel I should have given them 30 minutes more, all I can do is apologize. Now I don't think this has had any impact on . . . I had the papers distributed at 2.15 p.m. It is now 3.30 p.m., and there has been no presentation yet. The Leader of the Liberal Party rose at 2.20 p.m.

I repeat, I feel we acted according to the rules, and as the Parliamentary Secretary said, we do our best to try and make statements in the House, but we find that every time the Opposition tries to keep us from doing so.

Mr. Speaker: I must say it is impossible for the Chair to come down with a satisfactory ruling in a case like this. There is obviously a problem between the Government and the two opposition Parties. It is also clear it has always been the custom and even tradition here in the House to give sufficient notice when a Minister intends to make a statement or a speech in the House. I am very unhappy about the situation, but I repeat, it is impossible for the Chair to come up with a satisfactory solution.

[*English*]

Hon. Members have been on both sides of the Chamber. I would urge all government Ministers to give as much notice as possible in cases where the critics have an obligation to respond. This is a completely understandable tradition. It has not always been honoured, and in that regard, perhaps members on both sides of the Chamber in this particular Parliament are not blameless. The Chair has been here for some years. I have certainly heard this complaint before and I have been in a position where I have made the complaint. I know the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary will urge members of the Cabinet to make an extra effort to give adequate notice.

For the benefit of members of the public who are watching, the reason for adequate notice is that the critics who must respond to a Minister's statement do require time to think through the implications of the statement and its subject matter, and also for the formulation of a response. A statement by a Minister may be very brief but, nonetheless, a statement is important or it would not be made in the House. I must say that I commend the Government for the fact that it is making a great many statements in the House. That is in the traditions of this place and it is a good thing. However, I would ask Hon. Ministers to remember that the critics of the opposition Parties have their jobs to do too, and in the public interest of Canada, and notice wherever possible ought to be given with as much regard to the courtesies and traditions of this place as possible. Having said that, I hope Hon. Members will accept that the matter is closed. Under the rules, I must hear the Hon. Minister.

Statements by Ministers

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

TREATMENT OF PENSIONS AND SEPARATION PAYMENTS AS EARNINGS—U.I. PROGRAM

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I rise to advise Hon. Members of my intention to table, within the next few weeks, a Bill on the treatment of employment pensions and separation payments as earnings under the Unemployment Insurance Program.

[*Translation*]

Members may recall that on December 5, 1986, I announced this Government's intention to modify the UI legislation dealing with pension earnings. While maintaining the principle that persons who have retired should not use UI as supplementary income, the announcement proposed that workers who take other employment after their retirement and then work long enough to requalify for UI benefits should receive those benefits without any deduction of the previous pension income. The Government will amend the pension regulations to permit this as of April 5, 1987. Moreover, the Bill will permit retroactive requalification back to January 5, 1986.

[*English*]

These changes to the pension legislation are consistent with the Government's belief that persons who have retired from the labour market should not look to unemployment insurance as a supplementary source of income.

[*Translation*]

However, there is a difference between people who retire and leave the labour market and people who retire and start a new career. The changes I announced on December 5th addressed this difference and will ensure that people who retire and begin subsequent careers are treated fairly and equitably as active members of the labour force.

[*English*]

These changes will ensure that workers who start subsequent careers and contribute to unemployment insurance and subsequently become unemployed will be entitled to full unemployment insurance benefits based on their post-retirement employment income regardless of their previous pension income.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, you may also recall that in my announcement of December 5th, the Government noted there were allegations of imprecise information about the implementation of the January 5th, 1986, rules concerning pension income. I said in December—and I have said many times since then—that we would ensure fairness in the implementation of the January 5th provisions.

In December, I proposed that the Government establish a process to re-examine any case where people had alleged that they made their decision to retire on the basis of inaccurate information from federal Government sources.