

*Government Orders*

These employees have all contributed to the plan, as they would in the private sector. Some people, especially on the government benches, claim that public servants are getting a free ride. I can assure you that public servants, like their colleagues in the private sector, have contributed their fair share to their pension plan.

Public servants are professionals who dedicate their lives, and do so very conscientiously, to serving Canada's communities. They are paid to do this, but they have to consider the future. Public servants must have a pension plan that is fair. It is up to us as parliamentarians to ensure that public servants have a pension plan that is both fair and equitable, so that it can meet the needs of public servants when they are retired.

The superannuation fund now contains almost \$75 billion, or it will in a matter of months or, to be more specific, towards the end of the year.

Surprisingly, the government is the self-appointed administrator, comptroller, trustee and manager of the fund. The government has a monopoly. It is the official trustee of this pension plan, so it should be honest and fair in dealing with its employees. It is not a matter of handouts but of being fair.

We all know the government uses this money for its own purposes, either to pay off the deficit or the national debt. Contrary to the provisions of the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, employees and retired employees are not included on the Board. The Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 is an act respecting pension plans organized and administered for the benefit of persons employed in connection with certain federal works, undertakings and businesses. This act was assented to on June 27, 1986. The administration of pension plans will, according to the act, include at least one member of the pension committee chosen by plan members.

• (2030)

Let me ask you this, Mr. Speaker: Do employees have a representative on the pension fund advisory committee? Do retired civil servants have one? The answer is no, unlike other programs in various provinces.

This bill also provides for retired contributors to be represented on the management committee by a person appointed by them. "The employer, says the law, will ensure that the amounts deducted are accounted sepa-

ately from its own." He must keep them in trust. I ask you this: Does government use the money for its own purposes? Does government put it in a trust fund? Does government use it to reduce its deficit or the public debt? The Auditor General has already tabled a report in which he advised Parliament that the rate of return on the Public Service superannuation account was between 1 and 2 per cent under the current rate on the investment market. Pensions are not negotiable, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, there is a need to be fair to these employees in the legislation.

On the death of the contributor, the surviving spouse is entitled to 50 per cent of the benefits. Why is there no provision to allow surviving spouses, generally women, to receive 60 per cent, as provided for in other pension plans across the country? What government did with this 50 per cent entitlement is contrary to the terms of its own 1985 Pension Benefits Standards Act, which calls for 60 per cent. Is government truly committed to the well-being of its employees who, day after day, provide services and see to it that government legislation is enforced?

Why, discriminate against part-time employees, term employees, contract employees? It is unfair to women in particular. Why could part-time and term employees not contribute to the pension fund too? As you know, Public Service 2000 is now being implemented. This government's agenda is apparently to keep shrinking the Public Service indefinitely. It seems to have no respect for the Public Service and to want to privatize it all. Are we to understand that government is not really trying to provide its employees with a fair pension plan?

Then, there is this amendment about indexing. Why did the government vote against this amendment designed to maintain indexing? What is it up to? Does it have unpleasant surprises in store for its employees? Let us not forget that employees pay to get this protection. It is no gift or giveaway.

[English]

What does this government have against fairness? Why does it exempt itself from the standards established by the Pension Benefits Standards legislation? Why does it have to use regulations that leave distrust in the minds of public servants?