

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

services, either collectively or individually, then it is a terrible thing. These people have nobody to protect them except Parliamentarians. It would appear to me that the majority of Parliamentarians in this House are not up to that job and are not doing the job of protecting people who are unable to protect themselves.

Why we get into these types of situations is a question I have asked myself. But one of the more philosophical points would be the difference in strategy, outlook or concept between the Liberal and NDP Parties, on the one hand, and the Conservatives on the other. The Liberals' view of the national economy is that it is a zero sum game. They view the wealth of the nation as being a fixed sum. They are preoccupied with the distribution of this fixed sum. They like cutting the pie in different ways.

What we have in Canada is a gigantic Government, a giant maw that has to be fed more regardless of what happens to the private sector, the pensioners, or anybody else. The amount of funds required to feed that mouth are fixed. When the economy declines and public revenues are not coming in, then somebody else has to give; somebody else's slice of the pie has to be smaller. In this case, the Liberal Government has decided that it is the Public Service pensioners who will have to get the thinner slice of pie and subsist on less.

The Progressive Conservative view of the national economy and the way things should be run is that we should have an expanding economy. Instead of concentrating on dividing a fixed sum, we should be concentrating on releasing the shackles that tie up business enterprise.

I will not go into this matter. We have explained many times in this House how that might be accomplished. For instance, on many occasions the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) has put forward the concept of productive economics. If this were to be followed, then the pie would be expanded and everyone's slice would get larger day by day. We could afford to have the type of indexed pensions that public servants have now. Hopefully, we would be able to expand and allow other Canadians to have the same types of benefits.

● (1530)

With the Conservative approach to the economy, we would be able to afford decent pensions that we would like all Canadians to have. We could have pensions which would have a fixed real value in time instead of a declining real value.

One of the most painful aspects of the debate, I am sorry to say, has been the participation of the New Democratic Party. Its Members have apparently chosen this issue as the one by which to put some distance between themselves and their erstwhile friends whom they normally support—

Some Hon. Members: The Tories!

Mr. Nickerson: —the Liberal Party.

Mr. Althouse: We vote with you guys most of the time.

Mr. Nickerson: I am sorry to say that this tactic on their part has backfired. They have been utterly incapable of preventing passage of the Bill and they have revealed to the public at large their utter toothlessness. They have flailed their arms in the wind and blamed everyone for the plight of pensioners in whom they apparently now have a feigned interest.

In fact, I was listening very intently to the Hon. Member for Kootenay East-Revelstoke (Mr. Parker) yesterday, and this hon. gentleman even went as far as blaming that old NDP bugbear, the Canadian Pacific Railway. I do not see the connection, myself. Undoubtedly, that hon. gentleman can.

Mr. Ellis: He blames everything on CP.

Mr. Nickerson: All that the Members of the NDP have succeeded in showing is that if their policies were to be followed, they would be in precisely the same position as the Liberal Government. In fact, to all intents and purposes, their policies are the same. The pensioners, under such a regime, would be in even worse shape than they are today.

Let us reconsider this issue. Let us take advantage of the opportunity offered to us this morning by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) by way of his amendment which would put off the day of reckoning for another six months and would allow for the process of consultation between representatives of pensioners and people who will be pensioners and the Government of Canada. Let us take that extra six months which has been offered to us before finally dealing with the issue. I am sure that we can come up with a better deal for Canadian public service pensioners than we have today.

For these reasons, then, I wish to support the amendment with the majority of Members of my Party—all of the Members of my Party, as far as I know.

Some Hon. Members: Majority.

An Hon. Member: Well, 54.

Mr. Nickerson: I wish to support the amendment put forward by the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton and register my opposition and our opposition to the passage of third reading of Bill C-133.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Is the Hon. Member for Kootenay East-Revelstoke (Mr. Parker) rising to ask a question of the Hon. Member?

Mr. Parker: Yes, Mr. Speaker, if I may ask a short question. My question is with regard to his comments on the six month heist. Could he explain why his Party did not recommend this same heist when the initial six and five program—

Mr. Beatty: Heist or hoist?

Mr. Parker: —was brought into being?