

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

● (1730)

They know that it is indexed; they talk about the purchasing power. It is trust. The Government hires civil servants for the Public Service. They go into the diplomatic core, the Armed Forces, or the RCMP. All these people trust their employer to do what he said he was going to do when they retire. There is no other issue at stake here, none whatsoever, except trust.

We teach trust, and trust is inherent in our society right across Canada. That trust is implicit in our teaching of children in school, or when you take them to the bank. You say you can trust this institution, you can put your money in the bank and when you want those funds you can write a cheque and withdraw those funds. The trust is there in the Bank Act, that if they say they are going to pay an interest rate on your account, it will be paid.

Our whole society is built on trust of the very basic things. If you go into the rural communities of Canada today you will find that people trust their neighbours not to infringe on their property, they leave their doors open in the rural communities. The trust is implicit—all that we have at stake here today.

When an individual first joins the Armed Forces, for example, or the RCMP, he immediately starts looking for a career. Perhaps he does not look at the retirement benefits until he is married and has children and is looking to secure his position when he does retire. But at certain points along the way when he is offered a job outside of the Armed Forces, the RCMP or the Public Service, that becomes a very, very strong inducement for him to remain; and all we do is break the trust.

It is sad to say, but I see this trust being broken continually in other areas, and I am sure that Hon. Members on the Government side do not want to go down in history as part of a Government that introduced mistrust into our whole system. That clearly is what is happening, in my view.

Where was the trust, for example, when the national energy policy was brought forward, and when they reneged on agreements with foreign companies, and with Canadian companies, who indeed were told that there is a certain tax regime set-up, and if they will invest their moneys, private moneys, to develop a certain industry, this is the kind of return, this is the kind of thing that will happen. The national energy policy actually came in with a back-in provision that allowed them to confiscate properties. I implore Hon. Members not to allow this mistrust to arise among the employees in the Public Service, the Armed Forces and the RCMP. It is wrong; it is dead wrong. I think all Hon. Members, if they will reflect for a moment, will realize that.

We heard the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre say that we had to tighten the public purse, quit wasting money, quit spending money that we do not have. We cannot increase the deficit because if we do we are going to increase inflation because there will be a call on the money markets which will increase the interest rates, with devastating effect, right across the country. I agree. But how about restraining Crown corporations or Government corporations from expanding? An example is the purchase of BP by Petro-Canada. That is a cost to the taxpayer. It is a direct cost to the taxpayer when we allow a Government corporation, a Crown corporation or a

Government-owned operation to spend money. We hear we will increase the sales, et cetera, and we will be able to pay off BP in this respect, but that is not totally true. Some of it will be, possibly, but the Government is still paying in, transferring directly to Petro-Canada, millions and millions of dollars a year through the ownership levy at the pumps today. That is inflationary.

We have a new Macdonald Commission to look at the economy and come up with ideas on how Canada can fight inflation. At what cost? What is it going to cost taxpayers of this country to have this flim-flam Commission—\$5 million, \$10 million, \$15 million? Certainly it is going to be at least \$10 million. That in itself is inflationary.

What about the advertising we talked about earlier, Mr. Speaker, the advertising that is done by the Unity Office or the advertising that is now done by the six and five office? It created a bundle that was delivered to my office in hard cover, a very fancy document, a fancy book, that had to cost at least \$100 and more likely \$200 per copy. This was delivered to all Members and, indeed, probably across the country. How many copies were issued, 1,000, 2,000? Why not reduce in those areas?

The federal Government, the so-called people's Government, is the largest advertiser in Canada today, at a rate of \$70 million to \$100 million per annum. I do not think that people across Canada have to see all the advertising or to get a bound copy of the three dissertations that the Prime Minister made on his six and five proposals, et cetera, a few weeks ago.

There is something fundamentally wrong when we break the trust that we have with our employees, the employees of Canada, who have contributed, dedicated their lives and their working careers. In many cases Armed Forces personnel, RCMP and diplomatic corps people lived in situations they did not like. They remained because of a duty to their career or to their country. Often they were enticed to remain.

● (1740)

I left the Armed Forces after ten years' service. Canada or the federal Government had made an investment in my training and the expertise I had developed in certain categories. A real effort was made by the commanding officer, and later the personnel officer at the release centre, urging me not to leave the Armed Forces after ten years, telling me that if I remained for another ten years I would earn a pension and never have to worry. It was pointed out that I would still be a young man and could attain a higher rank. That is being said today to fighter pilots and to trained public servants. They have been in the past and will continue to be in the future talked into staying with their career, whether it be with the RCMP, diplomatic service or Public Service.

We cannot allow the trust relationship that has been built up over many years with the employees to be trampled in this way. This Government has an obligation. We cannot allow that trust to be broken. I hope that during the Committee