

Time Allocation

made the point repeatedly that the Bill does not have its origin in fundamental pension policy but rather in the Government's over-all economic stabilization program announced in the budget of June, 1982.

Mr. Kilgour: That is absolute nonsense.

Mr. Gray: This program began last summer with the application of the six and five limits to the wage increases of employees in the federal public sector for a two-year period. The second step of this program involves the application of the six and five limits to the indexation features of Family Allowances, Old Age Security pensions, personal income tax exemptions and Public Service pensions, again for a two-year period. The effect of the Bill is to limit the increase in indexing of Public Service pensions to 6.5 per cent in the first year and 5.5 per cent in the next year according to the terms of the amendment I have offered. Nothing that is presently being paid is being reduced. Nothing that is presently being paid is taken away.

Mr. Kilgour: That is absolute nonsense.

Mr. Gray: Hon. Members know that this Bill is a part of a program which has as its objective altering inflationary expectations and to provide a basis for economic recovery for reducing inflation and interest rates, and maintaining and creating jobs. The facts are very clear. This program has already had a useful effect if we look at the substantial reductions in inflation and interest rates over recent months.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Even before it is enacted?

Mr. Gray: Members of the Opposition continue to point to amounts of money in the superannuation accounts, and the fact that public servants have made contributions toward the cost of their indexing, which is something that we recognized in our amendment. There is also the fact that support has been given in the past to the concept of indexing of pensions to keep pace with the cost of living. We are also aware of facts like these and others, but I would like to say that the references made to huge surpluses are not accurate, and that the sufficiency of employee contributions has been questioned by many and is under review. Also, the Government remains committed to the principle of indexing, and this Bill provides for a return to the present system of indexing after the restraint period.

I suggest that everything possible has been said on this Bill. It is apparent from the debate so far, particularly from the remarks of Opposition speakers in the most recent stage of debate, that Members opposite have run out of new or cogent arguments and points to be made and they have begun resorting to all manner of irrelevancies simply to prolong report stage and the Bill's ultimate passage.

Let me cite some of the matters that we have heard discussed in recent hours on this debate. We have heard, for example, how the Hon. Member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Ellis) had dinner with the Hon. Grant Devine. I suppose if he speaks again he will tell us exactly what was on the menu. But that certainly is not the point of this Bill. We have had a rather questionable review from the Hon. Member for Simcoe

South (Mr. Stewart) of the federal Government's loan transactions. There was a quote offered by the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) from Ultramar Canada's assessment of PetroCan's competitive potential related to its low-cost capital structure.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Now read the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) letter.

Mr. Gray: I could go on citing other examples, Mr. Speaker, but the ones I have given, I think, do show why the motion on allocation of one final day to report stage and one day to third reading is a reasonable measure at this time.

Opposition Members may say that we are doing something contrary to parliamentary tradition. Aside from the fact that the steps we are taking are found in the rules adopted by this Parliament and are there to be used in support of its work. I want to remind the House that the British Parliament, the Mother of Parliaments, has had provisions of this type for many years which it uses on just about every Bill, including the most important. Time allocation is automatic in the British House with respect to almost every Bill that goes there, and there is not more than one or two days allotted to any stage of debate. What we are doing is certainly consistent with parliamentary tradition, especially that found in the British House, the Mother of Parliaments.

It is unfortunate that it has not been possible to negotiate an agreement for ending debate on Bill C-133, but in fact we believe time allotted to date for this Bill has been sufficient to enable a full range of opinions to be expressed about the capping of indexing of Public Service pensions as part of the six and five program.

In moving this motion, I am mindful that in the past pension cheques for superannuates have been sent out from and after the twenty-fifth of the month. In my view, the motion will assist in ensuring that pension cheques for superannuates are sent out in the traditional time period for superannuates.

To conclude, I submit, there has been a reasonable opportunity to debate this Bill and for the views of the public to be heard. A full range of opinion has been expressed on it. We are proposing that, in spite of the time already taken to debate this Bill, two more days be set by the House for debate and that we then go on to make a decision on this Bill so that we may get to other important business awaiting our attention.

• (1550)

Parliament is a place of debate but, even more important, it is a place of decision. It is time for a decision on Bill C-133. I urge the adoption of this motion.

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the question is not whether it is time for decision. The question is whether a decision ought to have been made long ago by the Government of Canada to deny an undertaking and agreement with respect to its own public servants. I must consider this motion in those terms.