

Government Orders

I will say why I think it is bad for the members who sit in the House. As with many of my colleagues I see around me, we came to the House to help set a new course in government. We came here with the best interests of our fellow Canadians in mind. We came here to bring integrity to the House.

I know many of us work very hard and diligently in this place, but I must say that today that I am ashamed of the pretence of my colleagues on the other side. I see arrogant initiatives that presumably are done in the name of change yet they change very little.

For instance, we see a program with three levels. We have a level of participation in this pension program which is virtually unchanged for those who sat in the House before the last election. I want to remind people particularly in my riding of some of the numbers that would be applied to these members of Parliament. The figures I have are based on nine year terms as ministers, assuming that these people live to age 75.

The hon. member for Sherbrooke, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party may gain from this legislation a pension of \$4.5 million. The neighbour to my constituency, the member for Burnaby—Kingsway, would gain from this legislation a pension of \$3.5 million. The Deputy Prime Minister, the member for Hamilton East, would have a pension at age 75 of \$2.5 million. This is done by this government in the name of change. Shame on the government.

Then there are the newer members. If they become retreads in the next election, there is still a very wide gulf between them and the Canadians they purport to represent.

According to one of the witnesses in the committee, even as this plan now stands, it is seven times greater than what would be expected in a public sector plan and four times greater than what would be expected in a private sector plan. The government calls this change.

This is bad for members as well who came here with the real belief in change, who wanted to make a difference and to raise the public attitude for this place. Those who decided to reject what has been given to us here are treated purposely with contempt in the sense that we are given the option that all pension benefits are lost to those who choose to reject this proposal.

• (1650)

Once again I am amazed at the arrogance of the members sitting on the other side of the House. I am amazed even in this discussion at their self-righteous indignation when we point out the duplicity of what they are saying.

This bill is also bad for Parliament. As we look at this bill and other bills that have come to this place, we see procedural nightmares and shoddy treatment of the democratic process. It is

true that when the original bill which brought in parliamentary allowances came in years ago, all stages of that bill were brought through the House in one day, including committee of the whole. At that time there was no written bill for consideration by the members. It simply was brought in and shoved through. We have not changed much. Is this a place of change? Is this the change promised by the red book?

What do we have with Bill C-85? Last week in committee, a committee that was dominated by government members, we had witnesses who represented real Canadians. We had witnesses who represented professionals in this field who were refused entrance to that committee. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation gained entry to the committee only by presenting itself to the committee and insisting on a hearing.

In that committee there was a lack of notice of the government's intent to proceed to clause by clause after a full day of witnesses. Even after the witnesses said there were many flaws in the bill, it took the government 12 minutes to complete its consideration of that piece of legislation. Over 28 detailed and complex clauses were covered in 12 minutes by the government.

It reminds me of what we experienced in the human rights and status of the disabled persons committee when we were considering Bill C-64 recently. In that circumstance, government once again invoked closure on the clause by clause portion with a five minute limit on each clause. Only four out of the 50 witnesses brought before that committee were from the Reform list of recommendations.

Then the government comes to the House and says there was an overwhelming support for employment equity of all things. Employment equity is the bane of the Canadian people. They do not accept it but this government tries to claim otherwise because the witnesses brought before the committee supported it. I call that a flouting disrespect for this place as Parliament.

Then when this bill came to the House earlier today, what do we get? Government invoked closure along with other bills so that we have a four hour maximum to discuss each of the two stages, report stage and third reading. In that time, we have 40 motions to be considered. Is that not bad for Parliament?

Finally, this bill is bad for Canadians. Underlying this whole debate is a moral imperative. All members, including the members on the other side have received phone calls and letters about this. I have received many. I am sure I have heard from the cousin of the constituent the member for Wild Rose mentioned. Pensioners in distress look at this legislation and say it is morally wrong for government to do this.

How can MP pensions continue to be gold plated under this bill when it is far above and beyond what ordinary Canadians can expect from their private or public sector pension plans? How can this government justify tinkering with the MP pension