

ton West (Mr. Lambert) for raising the matter of retirement in this House. I should point out to the hon. member that I will stop shortly before six o'clock in order to give this House an opportunity to refer this matter to a committee. I do not want to be the one to talk it out.

I disagree with the position taken by the hon. member for Edmonton West; not that I always have or always will. In the past I think I would have been very sympathetic to the proposal he put before us today, and I think that perhaps at some time in the future I might be. For the moment, however, I see our problem in a different light.

I suspect that we are going into a society which, despite the best efforts of governments to improve the situation in terms of employment—a great deal of improvement can take place at this time—there are not going to be enough good jobs to go around. This is true not just in Canada; it is true in the western world. We are facing a phenomenon in which, despite the growth of western economies, and despite the large number of highly educated people coming out of our school systems, the number of good jobs is becoming smaller and smaller.

We have a choice. We can keep those who are holding the good jobs in those good jobs longer, while we keep young people in school for a longer period of time or pay them unemployment insurance or give them jobs inadequate to their talent, or we can recognize what is happening to our civilization and try to do something about it.

In my experience, there seem to be two kinds of people working past the age of 65 or, for that matter, past the age of 60. There are those like ourselves, judges, executives and self-employed professionals who have very good jobs. They like their jobs. Their jobs are their hobbies, their entertainment. Their jobs are everything to them. They live and breathe their jobs. That is fine, because they are very exciting jobs to have. There are many problems associated with them, there is insecurity perhaps, but nevertheless they are exciting jobs, and these people are very reluctant to give up those good jobs regardless of their age. It is quite true that many people in these good jobs can function extremely well, well past the age of 65. Perhaps they can function even better after the age of 65.

However, there is another very large group of people who are working past the age of 65, not because they want to work and not because they have good jobs but simply because our pension schemes are inadequate, and they have to work.

● (1752)

When I go to my constituency, and I am sure this is the experience of other members, it is seldom that someone comes to me and says that we must raise the age of retirement to 70 or 75 because that person does not want to stop work. What I do get is people saying that it does not make much sense for them to slug it out in a factory until they are 65 when there are almost one million unemployed, half of them young people, who would like to work. "Why is there not a pension arrangement whereby people like myself could retire at age 63, 62 or 61? It would open up these jobs for younger people who want

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them," they say, rather than having them live through a kind of debilitating unemployment. Some young people face almost a permanent state of unemployment as a result of what is happening in our society.

I say to the hon. member for Edmonton West, and I say it critically, that his sentiments do him justice. However, in light of what is happening in our society, is this the appropriate time to do it?

The question being put to this House to consider is important and should be debated. I hope the consequence of the debate will not be to raise the age of retirement. Rather, I hope it will be to increase the pension arrangement for people who want to retire because there are more of them than those who want to hang on to their jobs.

I know people who want to hang on to their jobs. They are the ones who have it made. They have seniority. They have mastered their work so they can almost do it with one hand tied behind their backs. They like the social benefits, the emoluments that come with the job. Because they are senior people they are looked up to, and they command a fair amount of respect. However, that is hardly a job.

However, the auto worker in a factory, slugging it out day after day tightening a nut, can hardly wait to retire at age 50. The same is true of the coke-oven worker, the miner, or the person operating a sewing machine. Those are difficult grinding jobs, as are most jobs in this world.

To advance a proposal that is really attractive to a minute section of our population under the guise of civil liberties or the freedom or right of the individual to do as he pleases, while our society has a serious social problem and economic dislocation, is not the correct way of going about it. If this House wants to do something about correcting a grave inequity in our society, it should lower the age of retirement for women to 60.

An hon. Member: Men also.

Mr. Saltzman: Men later. Women's lib will not like it because in this area they have done a terrible disservice to the women of this country. Unfortunately, women have had some of the most rotten, lowest paying jobs. They are ready for retirement at 60. I guess we dare not talk about that because if men are not ready to retire at 60, then women should not retire at 60.

If the public were ever asked to give its opinion on this, I think it would be found that lowering the age of retirement to 60 for women, and for men progressively later, would be very much what people want. Certainly it would be good for our economy.

We really have one of three choices. We can go on having people work past the stage where they really want to work. That is what most people are doing. Most people work not because they are crazy about their jobs but because they cannot afford to quit. Our pension provisions are not adequate. If a working man wants to quit and his wife is not in receipt of the old age pension, even with the kind of supplementary arrangements that exist, it is still not sufficient.

Mrs. Pigott: Some of you men are old at 35.