

*Eldorado Nuclear Limited*

This has not been done with the consent of the workers. While the workers pay half the cost, the decisions are made entirely by the management of Eldorado. One commitment that was made was that the workers would be protected in retirement if there were serious inflation. Now they will get a money purchase plan. The company states: "When you retire, the money accumulated in your account is used to purchase a life annuity, a contract that guarantees that you will receive a regular monthly pension based on the amount of money in your account and the interest rates in effective when you retire".

This means that the pension of those workers on this new pension plan could be worth half as much as they expect, if interest rates happen to be low. If they strike it lucky, or the Bank of Canada squeezes the economy dry and interest rates become particularly high, perhaps they will do better and have a pension that is greater than they anticipated. However, that is not the kind of security people look to. When people retire, they do not want to play a speculative game of chance with their monthly pension. They want to know what their pension will be.

Furthermore, when the workers retire at age 60 or 65, hopefully their health will not be too badly eroded from the industrial pollution at Eldorado. Today, people can expect to live from 12 to 25 years after retiring at age 60 to 65. Even if inflation is at 4 per cent or 5 per cent, the value of the pension without indexing drops to half its purchasing power every 15 years. This means that the worker who retires at age 60 will see his pension halved in value at age 75. While their expenses for care, nursing, and so on will go up, the value of the pension will continue to drop if this money benefit plan is not changed.

In its haste to privatize Eldorado, the Government has broken faith with the workers of Eldorado. Perhaps the workers at Eldorado should have known, but the Conservatives have broken their promises on indexed pensions. The Conservatives, who have broken promise after promise to the Canadian people in the last five years, are breaking another promise.

The Minister of State for Privatization said that existing pension and benefit plans would be adopted by the new company. The new company has not even been formed, and the existing company is changing radically the kind of pension benefit plans that those workers had. Shame on the Government; shame on the Government for that kind of treatment to workers who have given their lives to this company. That is the kind of shoddy treatment people have come to expect from the Progressive Conservative Government.

In the course of the next election, the credibility of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Government will be first and foremost among the issues facing the Canadian people. They will want to know whether they can get a Government that has integrity and is honest and fair.

The few hundred workers at Eldorado who are affected, many other workers, and other people know that the Government can be judged on its treatment of the workers at Eldorado as much as it can be judged on its treatment of other people, such as the old age pensioners who were subjected to the threat of deindexed pensions in 1985.

I recall that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) promised exactly the opposite in the 1984 election campaign. He has eroded and degraded political promises to the point where a Small Claims Court Judge in Kitchener warned the public not to believe anything they hear from politicians. I must say that is unfair to the New Democratic Party. We keep our promises. The Progressive Conservatives have systematically broken their promises one after another. They cannot be trusted and in this Eldorado case, when they took away pension protection from the Eldorado workers in the course of privatizing the company, it once again demonstrated that this is not a Government which can be trusted.

● (2020)

[Translation]

**Mr. Richard Grisé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with close attention to the comments of the Member of the socialist Party on Motion No. 3, the purpose of which is to defer the privatization of Eldorado Nuclear for five years. Firstly, the privatization of Eldorado Nuclear will be effected over a period of seven years. As far as privatization is concerned, the Bill itself stipulates that the privatization provisions will be applied over a period of seven years.

The policy of the New Democratic Party, as I understand it, is to make a decision today, but to apply it five years later. I would judge this to be a fairly unusual practice in management or administration.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) and the other Members of the socialist Party have also spoken on the importance of the employees' pension fund. They have said that the employees' pension fund was completely—that what was being done was disastrous.

[English]

With regard to the pension fund for the employees, Eldorado Resources Limited has sent special bulletins to the employees.

**Mr. Cassidy:** Could you explain it to them on the basis of that information?

**Mr. Grisé:** They have the option to take the pension they have earned to date in the current pension plan, which will be paid to them on their retirement, or to take the value of their earned pension benefit under the pension plan and transfer this lump sum to the Eldorado money purchase pension plan. I could go on. They have had some organized meetings. They had meetings in Port Hope on July 7 and July 8, Blind River on July 14, and in Ottawa on July 18.