

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion***PROCEEDINGS ON
ADJOURNMENT MOTION**

A motion to adjourn the house under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

**PUBLIC SERVICE—SUPERANNUATED FEDERAL
EMPLOYEES—REQUEST FOR INCREASED
PENSIONS**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, April 29, as recorded in *Hansard* at page 8102, I put the following question to the Prime Minister:

In view of the fact that within the past few days the International Nickel Company of Canada and Imperial Oil Limited have announced plans for increasing the pensions of their retired employees, will the Prime Minister, as head of the government, expedite the cabinet's consideration of the question of increasing the pensions of retired public servants?

I thought that was a direct question and I dared to hope the answer would be yes. However, the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) reply was as follows:

We are proceeding according to plan, Mr. Speaker.

• (10:00 p.m.)

I tried again with a supplementary, which was as follows:

In view of the fact the President of the Treasury Board indicated on January 8 to an organization representing these people that there would be a report within a few weeks, can the Prime Minister say when there will be a statement as to the progress that has been made?

Again, I thought I might get a straightforward reply, but the answer as printed in *Hansard* was as follows:

Mr. Trudeau: The plan is secret, Mr. Speaker.

I wondered at the time what those words meant. I think what the Prime Minister was really saying to me was, "Will you go jump in the lake." In other words, the government is getting tired of these repeated demands some of us are making for consideration of this terribly important question of what is happening to the value of the pensions of retired public servants, but I want to say to the Prime Minister and to the government that even if the member for Winnipeg North Centre were not raising this matter as often as he can, the issue would not go away.

It is here as a very real problem. Its extent is increasing. It applies not only to retired civil servants but to retired employees of the railways of this country, to retired pensioners in all walks of life, and it applies to the

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard).]

pensions that are paid under the Old Age Security Act. As prices go up the value of pensions goes down. As the standard of living rises and retired people are left with what they had, the gap between them and the rest of society grows that much wider. Something has to be done about this issue. It cannot be put off and off the way the government is doing.

In my question to the Prime Minister on April 29, as I have already noted, I referred to the fact that two rather large companies in this country have recently taken action with respect to their former employees, namely, International Nickel and Imperial Oil. Certain other companies have done likewise. Most of the provincial governments have taken action in this field. The government of the United Kingdom has recently, for the seventh time since the end of World War II, increased the pensions of its retired civil servants.

I was interested in the press release from International Nickel. I am grateful to that company for having sent me a copy of it, for this release indicates that the increase in pensions is not insignificant. The increase varies all the way from 4 per cent for those retired in 1964 to as high as 25 per cent for those retired prior to 1951.

In other words, the recognition is growing that this is a problem about which something has to be done. There is not a doubt in the world so far as I am concerned that the day will come when it will be accepted practice that pensions are escalated after they have been put in pay, and this will be done in proportion to the increases that take place in the wages and salaries of those who are still working. Why must this government wait and be the last employer to accept this principle? The time to do this is now.

The government should give a lead, not just to follow or even to fail to do that. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think my question to the Prime Minister on April 29 was a legitimate one and that it deserved a straightforward reply.

We have had this issue around for a long time. We have had a unanimous report of a special committee, presented to the house on May 8, 1967. We have had assurances and promises galore. All I asked the Prime Minister to do on April 29 was to give me his assurance that he would do his best to get his colleagues in the cabinet to expedite their consideration of this matter. I hope that whoever is answering for the Prime Minister tonight will give me that assurance, that an