

Private Members' Business

indemnity as a member of Parliament would be reduced from the standard \$64,000 to \$34,000 because I was receiving this additional pension from my previous employment. They were funds that I had earned in the course of that employment and which were payable to me as a result of that work.

Let us assume that the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden had no pensionable earnings from previous employment. He came to the House and earned his \$64,000. What inducement would there be for me to work on a full time basis as a member of Parliament when my salary was less than his? I would be paid \$30,000 less by Parliament for doing exactly the same job presumably he was elected to do. Why should I do that? Why should I be paid on a different basis?

We are all paid the same amount as members of Parliament. Some of us work harder than others. We accept that fact, but the House does not make any differentiation between that. We are all paid the same and it is assumed we all do the same work. We all certainly have the same responsibility.

Some of us get a little extra money because we are parliamentary secretaries or cabinet ministers. However as members of Parliament, we all receive the same basic pay. It is not adjusted downward because one of us receives a pension. Yet, the hon. member not only would draw that distinction between MPs, he would then draw it only in respect of those who received pensions from a public sector pension fund.

If mine happened to be from a private employer, I could keep my money and take no reduction. If it came from a public sector employer, I would take a cut in my pay as a member of Parliament. I do not think it is fair and the hon. member on serious reflection would realize it is unfair.

Tempting as it is to go after his friends in the Reform Party, that is not the way to do it. Pensions represent deferred earnings. The sessional indemnity that members of Parliament earn is paid for us to do our job here. After all, we are paid to do the job we were elected to do at the specified rate I have indicated. That rate surely is one that is not overly generous. To suggest that it ought to be reduced because someone gets a pension modest or otherwise from another source is unfair.

Who will be prejudiced by the hon. member's bill? Let us look at who is likely to end up suffering. It will be those who are over an age where they could draw a pension. Younger members of Parliament will not qualify for a pension in any event. It will almost exclusively be more senior members who will be affected by this. Senior members are here to work as are the younger members. Why should they be paid less as members of this Parliament because they are older and entitled to another pension? I ask the hon. member to reflect on that. I do not think he has in drafting the bill.

There is no reason for the hon. member to assume that all public pensions are heavily subsidized the way the MPs pension has been until the recent changes the government brought in and which I assume is the evil he is driving at. He is suggesting that because public pensions are somehow subsidized by the taxpayer they are a polity different from those that are paid by private employers and therefore a public sector pension should result in the lowering of the MPs salary.

I do not agree because many public sector pensions are not subsidized heavily by the taxpayer. They are paid on the basis of matching contributions by employer and employee, as are private sector pensions. I suggest there is nothing unfair about that.

• (1755)

The ability to draw a pension from one employer, private or public, when working with another stems from the fact that the individual completed a career and has moved on to another. In private work if I have qualified for a pension in my first job and move to a second job and draw the pension, that factor is not taken into account by my second employer in determining salary. That matter will be negotiated between me and the second employer. If I happen to be in an organization where the rate of pay is fixed by some kind of collective agreement, I will be paid at a standard rate with no possible reduction because I happen to be receiving a pension from another source.

Given that, why would the hon. member seek to interfere in that employer—employee relationship particularly those under a collective agreement which he says he and his party support so staunchly?

We all know what happened in Ontario with the recent New Democratic Party government. The New Democrats claimed to be the great friends of labour but by the time they left office after the last provincial election everyone acknowledged they were not the friends of labour. In fact they were probably the greatest enemies the Ontario labour movement had for some time, until the Mike Harris government came in, but that is another matter. We all remember with great fondness the Rae days the former premier imposed in the province of Ontario. The hon. member for Lisgar—Marquette may not be fully conversant with the disaster we suffered in Ontario for the five years ending earlier this year. It seems we have moved from one disaster to another in our province.

I see the chief government whip is advising me that the gun control bill has cleared the Senate, 64 votes to 28. Mr. Speaker, I thought you would want to know. presume that is without any amendments.

Mr. Boudria: That is right.

Mr. Milliken: That is very good news.