

some 14 or 15 times in this session. It is ready to drop on the heads of the public servants who will have their pensions decapitated. I am pleased to reiterate my Party's point of view and to state that we will vote against Bill C-133. Of course, we will vote in favour of the amendment of the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker).

We are pleased that our point of view is supported by some Hon. Members in the benches opposite. These gentlemen are acting according to the dictates of their consciences and the wishes of their constituents. I hope they will not be chastised by the Party brass, as was the case in past dissent within the Government Party. We have seen examples of Members of the Liberal Party who have dared speak out against the Government. They have been stripped of their privileges and removed from positions of emolument within the Government system. But in spite of this, there are at least four and probably more Members on the other side who will vote tonight with the Progressive Conservative Opposition.

● (1520)

Despite protestations to the contrary by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) this morning, the action which has been accomplished by Bill C-133 is indeed a breach of contract. That is the view of the pensioners who will be affected and it is the view of this side of the House. It is, as the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton said this morning, a contract, an agreement enshrined by virtue of the statute law of Canada, and it ought not to be changed in the manner that it is now being changed. This type of change is probably worse because, as the President of the Treasury Board said this morning, public servants have no option but to become members of the Public Service pension scheme. They do not have an option to shop around. They cannot look at who might be a better manager of pension funds; they have to embrace the Government's scheme. For that reason we should be very careful how the funds are managed and how the legislation which affects that scheme is dealt with in this House.

During the debate on this issue there has been a great deal of input by associations of pensioners and by Public Service unions. I and I am sure many other Members of this House, found that input to be very valuable. In particular, I would like to single out the Professional Institute of the Public Service. I think its presentations were of a most professional nature, as might be expected of that body, and under the circumstances I found its representatives more than restrained.

The effect of the Bill we have before us today will make it very difficult for pensioners to plan ahead. They will not know from one year to the next what their pensions provide for them. If they are to plan at all, they will have to plan for a declining standard of living as time goes on. For example, if someone retires at age 65 with a reasonable standard of living, he or she will have to face the fact upon reaching age 70 that that standard will decline. By the time the person is 75, instead of taking taxis he or she will have to ride a bus, and by the time that person is 80 years of age it will mean walking, if that is possible, because he or she will not be able to afford the bus fare. I think Canadians want and deserve a better deal for their elderly than has been put forward by Members opposite.

### *Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)*

Pensioners and Public Service pensioners have a feeling of betrayal. I doubt whether public servants in the employ of the federal Government will ever trust their employer again. One of the reasons public servants dislike what is going on is that they now find out that the Government has been very selective in the application of cutbacks. For instance, we learned this morning that Bank of Canada employees will have an 11 per cent increase, or slightly more than that, in their pensions whereas other people in the employ of the federal Government will be restricted to a 6 per cent increase, or little more than 6 per cent, with inflation still raging at 11 per cent per annum or better.

In my opinion, the Public Service of this country has been used as a political pawn. When the Government wanted the electoral support of the public servants, it made all kinds of promises to them. The Liberals said: "We are going to increase salaries; we are going to give indexed pensions and there will be increased pensions". But now, when times are a little tougher because of mismanagement and ineptitude on the part of Liberal Governments, this Liberal Government is desperately seeking a scapegoat and it has found it in the public servants.

The same thing is happening in the Province of Quebec. In fact, if anything the situation is worse in that Province. Public servants in the Province of Quebec were at one time the greatest supporters of the PQ Government, for the sort of reasons I have just cited. But now the financial situation in that Province is extremely bad. It is probably the worst of any Province in Canada. Unlike the federal Government, the Province of Quebec does not have access to the printing presses, and the Government of the Province of Quebec is having to take desperate measures and cut back its provincial expenditures. But guess who is getting hit, Mr. Speaker. It is the public servants in that Province, with the exception of the police. The police have to be excluded because no doubt they will have to be used for certain purposes.

Had there been a federal Progressive Conservative Government over the last few years, it is my submission that the situation would have been much different than it is today. We feel that the Public Service should not be used for political purposes. The Public Service should be beyond political partisanship. We have the concept of honesty in our dealings with public servants. Of course, the Public Service unions would find it fairly tough bargaining with a PC Government, of that there is no doubt. But when an agreement is reached and a contract signed, sealed and delivered, the unions could be absolutely assured that it would not change and that it would go for the term of the agreement.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Remember how badly Michael Pitfield did.

**Mr. Nickerson:** A broken contract is bad enough for people who are still working, but when it comes to pensioners, people who have no leverage, who are unable to withdraw their