

*Private Members' Business*

That is why I have tabled this motion. The motion calls for an independent non-partisan commission to review all salaries, pensions and benefits of members of Parliament; not a commission of members of Parliament, not a commission of former members of Parliament as we have after every election, a well-paid commission that reports and then nothing is done on it, but an opportunity for members of the public from coast to coast, from constituencies in Regina, Toronto, British Columbia, Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and elsewhere to tell their elected representatives and to tell an independent commission what they think.

I want to single out two particular areas that I think do constitute inequities that should be examined by this commission. First of all there is the question of the eligibility age, the fact that after six years of service, no matter what the age of the either retired or defeated member of Parliament is, they become eligible for a life time pension indexed at the age of 60. I think Canadians can legitimately ask whether that is fair.

As well Canadians can legitimately ask whether the opportunity to receive a very generous federal pension in addition to another federal salary, whether it be as a member of the judiciary, as a federal appointee or in another capacity, any of those very lucrative positions, should be supplemented by a federal pension as well.

Canadians are asking whether that is fair. I think it is important that there be an independent tribunal, an independent commission, that would give Canadians the opportunity to speak to that and to voice their concerns at this particular time in our country's history.

I want to note that on June 12 I spoke in the House on this issue. I pointed out that the President of the Treasury Board responded to a letter that was sent by the hon. member for Yukon, the leader of the New Democratic Party, and said at that time that he was prepared to put together an independent and *ad hoc* review of the pension scheme.

• (1740)

This is what the President of the Treasury Board said in a letter to the member for Yukon. He said: "At this time I am developing final proposals on the terms of

reference for and composition of the *ad hoc* group which will undertake this review". That was on June 12.

Today, some six months later, where is the review? Where is the leadership of the President of the Treasury Board? Where is the leadership or the call of the Liberal Party for action on these inequities? Silence.

I am proud of the leadership that my colleagues and particularly the leader of the federal New Democratic Party have shown on this issue of equity and fairness. It is for that reason that I hope and assume that members on all sides of the House will join in supporting this motion. What it does is say that we are prepared to listen to the Canadian people. We are prepared to have an independent commission to give the Canadian people an opportunity to be heard on the question of MPs' pensions.

I challenge the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell from the Liberal Party, I challenge the Conservative members in this House to say to the people of Canada and to their constituents that they are not prepared to even listen to them, that they are not prepared to allow an independent commission to hold public hearings with respect to the fairness of the MPs' pension plan. Let them stand up in the House and take that position.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that a number of members are looking for—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** I am sorry but on a point of order, the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

**Mr. Boudria:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member just asked me to stand up and that is exactly what I am doing. I wonder if he is yielding the floor at this moment so that I can make my speech.

**Mr. Robinson:** Mr. Speaker, I know that a number of my colleagues who are in the House today are anxious to participate in this debate. We certainly await with interest the position of the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell who was so vigorously attacking the member for Yukon when she called for a review of pension plans. We will await with interest his position on this motion and the position of Conservative members.