

Supply

I might also mention that my friend from Kingston and the Islands will qualify if he lives to age 75 and all goes well for him and he will stand to gain \$1,061,976. That is not a bad pay out at all.

You can see that this is a rather touchy subject across the aisle, Madam Speaker, and you are on the list as well of benefiting.

Yesterday the class of '88 qualified for "Lotto for Life", reveals editorial comments across the country. We saw yesterday such descriptions as outrageous, gold plated, golden parachute, inflation proof, pension paradise and probably the most descriptive and graphic of all, hog heaven.

I know there are many members across the aisle right now who are just dreaming of the day when they qualify for hog heaven. They need to be re-elected one more time.

Is this divisive, is it destructive and is it detested? Yes to all of the above. This does more to divide parliamentarians and taxpayers who pay the bills for these parliamentarians probably than anything else. We see that this is a system in which members of Parliament are totally exempt from everyone else in the country. As my friends know, many of them have been in other professions before. They will know clearly that this pension plan is more, bigger, better, higher, everything else, overbloated, than any pension plan they could have ever bought into when they were working in the private sector. They know it, we know it and the people who pay our bills know it.

My friend across the aisle says that is not true. There is not a pension plan in this country that pays dividends of employer-employee ratios of approximately six to one. I would like to bet on that and I am looking forward to the members bringing that to our attention in debate as well as proof.

We are demanded in this country as parliamentarians to put in 11 per cent of our earnings. We have no options on that. We must put in 11 per cent of our salary toward the MP pension plan.

I am a member of the Alberta Teachers Association and we put in \$92 a month to our pension plan. That was in the regular private sector. I am forced by the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act to put in just under \$600 a month out of my salary. Somehow that means that we are putting in a lot but the government kicks back far more than it puts in. For instance in Canada we are demanded, as I just said, to put in 11 per cent of our earnings. It is mandatory, there are no options about that. We qualify then for a minimum pension after six years of service. Madam Speaker, you know that, I know that and the Canadian taxpayers who pay the bills know that. As of age 60 it is fully indexed to the cost of living allowance—very expensive.

Let us look at the United Kingdom. Its members put in a 6 per cent contribution level and are eligible after age 55 or age 60 plus years of service equalling 80. That looks very fair. Most of

them are full time. I suspect anyone in public life serves full time regardless of the number of hours they put in a week.

Let us look at the United States. People who serve in Congress in the United States have to put in a 1.3 per cent contribution level. They qualify at minimum age and serve age 62 or age 50 plus 20 years of service. This looks like something that is a little fairer, a little more level than the pension plan that we have now.

• (1020)

I suspect from the amount of noise across the aisle perhaps we have touched a raw nerve here. That is fine. Touch nerves we will.

The plan that the premier of Alberta has just brought in has in effect blitzed members of the legislative assemblies. My friend across asked me to talk about double dipping. We are against double dipping. When you are in one level of government, you may not collect a pension for another level of government.

We are asking this government to make sure that it follows its red book promises. I suspect these will turn out to be red face book promises very soon.

The members of Parliament retiring allowances plan simply must be replaced. There are two aspects to this, the first is the retiring allowances act which lets members contribute up to 2 per cent years of service on earnings on the limit up to 75 per cent. This first account under the whole retirement allowance plan qualifies as a registered retirement allowance plan under the Income Tax Act. That is fine, nobody has any problems with that, I suspect even new MPs in the House.

If the MP pension plan were restricted to this first account, the taxpayer would not complain because our plan would then conform to normal public service plans. The problem is the second part of this, the retiring compensation arrangement account, the RCA. I am reminded of the old ad, they really are now RCA victors as of yesterday. That is the account that leads one to question the judgment and fiscal integrity of those who put it in place and subsequently defended it.

This account draws contributions from members in the government that exceed the 6 per cent limits prescribed by the Income Tax Act. I have one word for that, shame. Shame on a government that would continue to do that and bring it in. It pays benefits prior to the age and length of service required by the Income Tax Act to allay accusations of one set of tax laws for ordinary Canadians and a different set of tax laws for parliamentarians.

The pretence is that these payments are as is said in the study, a retirement compensation allowance to compensate members for the volatile tenure of their jobs. There is not a job in this country that does not have volatile tenure. This is one of them