

Government Orders

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Madam Speaker, I cannot help but rise because the hon. member from the NDP indicated and referred to the actuarial report. I think he has to give credit to whom credit is due. I do not like to claim credit personally but certainly it is on record that it was I, as the Official Opposition critic for National Health and Welfare, who recommended to the legislative committee examining this bill that we invite an actuarial expert to speak on the actuarial report.

Following that submission, the government tabled that report in the House a few hours ago so that the same report can be discussed at the legislative committee. I am glad that my hon. colleague brought this to the attention of the House. It was the initiative of the Liberal Party that brought to light that report at the legislative committee.

In terms of the procedure that we should wait because the report sort of provides a barrier preventing us hearing from the NDP, I do not think so. The Chair has ruled that this motion is in order and therefore within the purview of Parliament to pass it if it wills it.

Let us not sort of blame someone. Actually, I am at a loss as to why the NDP would blame the Liberal Party and at the same time admit that amendment we have proposed is an excellent one. That is paradoxical. No average Canadian citizen will see the reason for that kind of debate. Either it is good or it is not good. If it is excellent as he has indicated it is, then it must be supported. He has indicated he will support it. Why then blame someone who has proposed a motion that is excellent?

In all modesty, the Liberal Party, the Liberal caucus, has taken the lead on pension reform. The Liberal Party is about genuine reform.

In terms of the comment of the hon. member that he would support the bill, I would certainly thank him as well and I would like the parliamentary secretary to equally support this amendment on behalf of government.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, I would like to react to the New Democratic Party member's comments earlier.

Like my colleague from Winnipeg, I wondered why the member would say these are great amendments and then call the action a farce at the same time. It seems to me that this is the highest court in the land for pension reform in this country. If I understand the process correctly, and if we have almost unanimous consent for most of these amendments, it would seem rather strange to me that all of those provinces would ignore all of these recommendations. It is up to us to take the initiative here.

The member for Don Valley East who this week put forward a fabulous motion which we all agreed to and all supported, every member in the House, is certainly not worried today whether the province of Ontario is going to say no to that amendment because I could not imagine the province of Ontario, on such a fundamental issue, going against the unanimous consent of this House.

I know we tend to be a little intimidated by the provinces in this House because we have given them so much power in the last seven or eight years, but I think we have to start realizing that this is the national chamber for Canada. I think it is time, when we all get together on some fundamental issues and we all agree on them, we then say to the provinces: "Listen, we have got the political will here and we want you all to follow suit".

That is where I come from on the relationship with the provinces, especially when we all seem to be in accord.

I want to go back to my colleague from Cape Breton Island's remarks earlier. He is so right on the money. I have heard in the last three months of a case in which a man has been waiting for almost three years to get his disability pension processed.

• (1130)

I went to his home and visited him. The man has some 37 different breaks in his body. He is on two canes. He is obviously disabled and it seems to me that there has to be a situation created in this bill in which timeliness is really respected.

One of the greatest problems we have in this town is what I call the "mad" treatment, which we get so often from public officials. "Mad" for me means maximum administrative delay.