

happened here. However at the same time, as a member of that committee, I want to say to this member very clearly that if he had been at that committee and had seen the activity that took place and how the government conducted themselves there he would understand what happened in this House.

There were over 40 or 50 amendments put forward in committee, and each time the government's hands went up and they were defeated. There were 112 amendments that came back to this House to be debated, which we tried to get through in committee. At the same time not one government member was getting up in the House. I understand the hon. member was not here Friday because of commitments in his riding. He should take into consideration what took place in the committee and the kinds of frustrations we were going through and what went on in this House when we were debating the amendments. The government was simply not listening.

With regard to MPs' pensions, I am very proud and I take no exception to the remarks of the leader of our party. When this bill was introduced, she identified the very problems the hon. member is talking about. We called for an independent study and our leader got that in a letter from the minister. That is more than we got in all the amendments that we put forward. At least we have a letter stating that he is going to prepare an *ad hoc* committee and start putting the process in place.

I just want to say to the member that I understand his frustration and I fully understand the concerns that he has. I have those same concerns. I only wish the government would have listened to us, but it was not in a listening mood.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The hon. member has a minute to wind up.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Speaker, I did not read all the evidence of the committee, but I did read the last few days of it when committee members were moving amendments and talking about the indexing problem which produced those two letters that I read into the record. The member was there and very active in that. I also noticed the amendments that did not find favour.

As a lawyer, in terms of legislation, letters are not law or regulations so I will be a lot happier when I see the letter fleshed out giving the criteria and a time.

### *Government Orders*

The NDP leader did make a speech and it ruffled a lot of feathers. It even ruffled a few feathers in their caucus. It certainly ruffled a lot of feathers around here because she was the first leader to come out very directly on this issue which has caused a lot of concern in the public domain. I do give his leader credit for that, but I felt members should have forced the issue a little more. I was away so I am guilty, but it would have taken five of us only to force the issue a little more. That still would not have impeded the commitment for the *ad hoc* inquiry if some of those amendments had carried on Friday.

**Mr. John Brewin (Victoria):** Madam Speaker, it is actually quite interesting to rise in this House and speak after the hon. member for Annapolis Valley—Hants. He was referring to MP's pensions and spoke about his father being a member of this House.

My father was also a member of this House. He retired in 1979 with a pension of \$12,000 to \$13,000 a year, I think it was, after 17 years of service. He had been a lawyer. He came here at about age 55. He was at the most productive period of his law practice when he gave it up to become a member of Parliament. He died a few years later so my mother's pension is half of what his was. It is not exactly a princely sum. There are other stories than the ones that David Somerville peddles across this country for his own profit.

This inquiry we are going to have hopefully will reveal to the country as a whole the full story of the issue of pensions.

It is long overdue that we have this inquiry. It is important that trust be developed in this place and that we are dealing at arm's length with these issues. It is a step forward that we are getting the inquiry referred to earlier. We, as members of Parliament, have to be prepared, along with everyone else in the country, to take a look at our working conditions. We also have to be prepared to have those undergo public scrutiny.

When I had a chance to look into the issue of members' pensions I was surprised to find two facts which you do not see in the Somerville ads: that the pensions paid out so far are more than covered by the MPs' contributions and the interest on the funds. In other words, the government's matching contributions have not so far been touched. While he tries to claim