

Private Members' Business

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand in the House today to address this particular motion.

First let me be very, very clear. I support the motion and I will tell you why I do. I spoke about this topic and I made this proposal on March 5, 1991; 21 months ago. It took the leader of the NDP 15 months to wake up and find out that proposal had been made and it took her members six more months to find out that she had made it. That is why we are debating here tonight, I guess.

This is what I said. I want to make sure the record is very clear. On March 5, 1991, over 21 months ago, I said: "Let us consider an independent third party to address questions of salary, pensions, allowances and other remuneration". That is fairly clear. It is in fact exactly what we are debating tonight. For the NDP to suggest that all of sudden they have come up with this great new idea that has electrified Canada, sorry it simply does not wash, it is a crock.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member but I am sure he would want to acknowledge that indeed a number of members of this House, including myself, over the past years have made a proposal for an independent commission. The point that I have made is not one member of his caucus, including the member himself, proposed either a bill or a motion to that effect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It is a matter of debate.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, sometimes the hon. member and his colleagues are very very difficult to take. For example, one colleague said we want those who do not want to be here to step aside so no people can come in, so we can do things differently; the suggestion then being the NDP do things differently.

We had one of their people, one of their elected MPs, roughly a week ago going to a riding of one of my colleagues who has undergone a quadruple bypass and denigrate what he had contributed to this House. Is this doing things differently? Is this the way we want to do things?

I am sorry, that is not the way I want to do things. This is what I said on March 5, 1991: "We should be asking questions such as the following. Why does it take 10 years only to accumulate 50 per cent of salary as a pension for MPs while in many other instances it takes 25

years to accumulate the 50 per cent?" I also asked if it is appropriate for an MP to have a cap of 75 per cent of salary? In a number of other instances although not always, it is capped at 70 per cent of salary.

• (1820)

I also indicated on that particular date MPs could retire at any age after six years of service with no penalty. They could collect their pensions then, while others, if they retired before 60, sometimes suffered up to 2 per cent to 3 per cent penalty per year.

I wonder if there is adequate explanation for those kinds of discrepancies.

I also mentioned double-dipping, but since that time I have become familiar with the terms triple-dipping and quadruple-dipping. I want to be fair. I mentioned Mr. Nielsen at that time who was collecting a fully indexed pension and earning a salary of over \$130,000 a year. I am told Mr. Broadbent is collecting a full pension as well. He is one of the New Democrats I truly, truly appreciate who has a job in the neighbourhood of \$100,000 a year I am told. I also used the example that day of the Minister of Communications and indicated he had been elected at a very early age. If he were to live to be 75, and I said he probably will because as cranky as he is he is no doubt assured of that, he would collect over \$5 million of pension.

I also asked on that particular date if it was fair for people to receive a pension after six years of service. I also indicated I did not want to cast any judgments. I wanted an independent third party to look at our new remuneration package fully, in relation to what is offered in colleges, universities, the private sector, the Public Service and what have you. It could then recommend some specific guidelines for remuneration of MPs including their pension package.

It is not appropriate for us to set the rules. We set the rules on our own salaries and benefits. I think that is really questioned by Canadians all over. What is important

[*Translation*]

We should not claim today that this is a brand new idea, that it was proposed by the leader of the New Democratic Party, and that this is the first time we actually realize there are pensions that are quite high and are vastly different from what is available in other sectors.