

escalation can come into effect, especially for retired personnel of the RCMP and Canadian Armed Forces. This is another subject we have discussed many times in the question period and in late shows.

As the minister just indicated, the way the law now stands, unless an RCMP or armed forces person retires early because of illness, he does not get the escalation until he reaches age 60, even though he may have served the full term he was permitted to serve under the regulations of those two branches of government service. Many people feel very badly about this. They point out they served their full term. They know the arguments the government has put forward about their pension plan being different and so on and that at these earlier ages, some of them can get other jobs. The fact is that many of them cannot. I have run into cases of persons who served out their term whereas they could have taken a retirement because of illness a year or so earlier and qualified for the escalation. However, because they served out their term, they were not able to do so.

When the rumour got around that this bill would do something about the age, I hoped the minister would bring it right down to 55 or 50 so that persons who had served their full term in the RCMP or armed forces would be entitled to the escalation of their pension the year after retirement. The minister has not done that. I think he likes these late shows in which he and I are often involved. It must be that he likes to leave something so that I can still go after him.

All that is being done is to provide retired armed forces and RCMP personnel to pick up their escalation at 55 if they have 30 years service, 56 if they have 29 years service, 57 with 28 years service, 58 and 27 years service and 59 if they have 26 years service. Why do we have to take two or three bites at the cherry? Why could the minister not have dealt with this in one action and met the points these people have brought forward? In any event, this is another case of welcoming what is before us, but wishing the minister had gone all the way.

Despite those words of criticism, I regard this bill as extremely welcome. I know that retired civil servants who will be affected by it will be pleased to know that in January they will get an increase in their pension based on the actual cost of living, particularly the old-timers who retired before 1970. I think particularly of the old-timers who were retired before 1970 who have the prospect this January of a pension increase of perhaps 11 per cent, or possibly even a bit more.

● (1240)

The hon. member for Hillsborough made reference to the fact that there is one section of the bill which deals with retired members of parliament who are on pension. I was one who was extremely annoyed, when Bill C-194 was brought in back in the session of 1969-70, to find that what some of us had fought to achieve for a long time, namely an improvement in the pensions of retired civil servants, had been linked with a massive improvement in the pension plan for members of parliament. The whole thing was put into one package. Some of us did not like what was done for MPs at the time as compared with what was being done for others; we moved the appropriate amend-

#### *Supplementary Retirement Benefits*

ments and we took our stand about that. It is a matter of record, and those who were here remember it well. I speak as one who was opposed to the generosity of the arrangements made for the MPs, but I think it should be clear, now, that what is being proposed here does not change the basic scale of pensions for MPs at all, not make one cent higher the pension any present member of parliament will get on retirement. All it does is to remove the ceiling on the escalation of pensions for those who are already retired while, of course, it will remove it in the future for any members now here who will at some point in the future go on pensions.

In the main this is a piece of legislation which will improve things, if I may be non-partisan, for persons like M. J. Coldwell, Gordon Churchill and Jim Brown. I mention three people whose names I am sure are well remembered by those who have been around here for a time and I know that in the case of the first person I named, he went out on pension when the maximum was \$3,000 a year, for all the service he had put in. He has received the escalations in pension which were provided under the existing act, which brought the pension up a little bit, but it is still a pretty small pension, much smaller than the one to which the hon. member for Hillsborough referred. I am thinking of people like Mr. Coldwell, Mr. Churchill and His Honour Judge Brown—I understand that the latter has retired from the bench because of ill health. I think all of us who knew them are not ashamed that in this legislation we are including for them an escalation of their pensions in January which will be equal to the actual increase in the cost of living, and in the case of Mr. Coldwell, since he went out some years ago, he will get the 11 per cent which will be available to him. Indeed, for these gentlemen we should be doing even more, and I felt, Mr. Speaker, that because some references are bound to be made to this aspect of the bill, I should make this point. I am still sorry it is linked with the other. I think that when we make provisions for MPs they should stand on their own feet and not be part of a package. But what this does is simply add an element of fairness to those who have already retired.

Now, Sir, I said that despite my appreciation of this bill, my readiness to welcome it and not to play the usual opposition role of saying it isn't as good as it ought to be, there are some things which remain to be done—not in this bill, but I hope they will be in some bill in the future. Before I get to that, may I just say a word about the costing arrangement? I have discovered already that some of those who did not like the one half of one per cent are therefore not likely to like the one per cent which is to come into effect in 1977. Still, it doesn't worry them today, because they think anything can happen between now and 1977. This is something I should like to discuss when we get into committee, whether it is really necessary at this point to provide for that increase in the premium to one per cent in 1977.

The more substantial things about which I should like to say a few words have to do with improvements which I think should still be made to the Public Service Superannuation Act and related pieces of legislation. I said a moment ago that one of the things about life is that we never reach perfection, and I am glad life is like that. "A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven