

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970

ernment will not produce sufficient money to make it possible to make the payments that are indicated in this plan without additional money having to be provided by the treasury, then I suggest somebody should say so and we will change it. But if I wish to contribute 10 per cent of my wages to a pension plan, I should have the right to do so and would expect my employer to match that contribution.

When the Canada Pension Plan was passed I, and some of my colleagues, recommended to various organizations and agencies that the vested pension plans in Canada that were already in existence should be added to the Canada Pension Plan. If this had been done in a number of areas—one of them being my area where the engineers and firemen have been participating in an Ontario pension plan—and if those pension plans had been stacked on top of the Canada Pension Plan, the resultant pension would have been very close to \$2,000 a month on the retirement of these people, which would have been almost \$1,000 more than they were earning. I suggest there is nothing wrong with that if people want to contribute that high a portion of their wages to a pension plan and if that pension plan does not become a drain on someone else. I think this decision should be left up to the people who participate in the plan, and they should be allowed to make that contribution if they can afford it.

I suggest that there are differences of opinion. In many cases they probably stem not from people's conscience, as has been said, but rather from their environment and background, from the type of people they have worked with and the relationships they have had with other classes of people, sometimes much more fortunate than themselves. Sometimes these differences of opinion arise from the desire not to reduce everybody to a common denominator but to raise the lowest standard of living to the highest possible standard that people can afford.

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): I intend to be very brief and deal primarily with the amendment before us, but others have had one or two general comments to make on the bill and I understand that this is permitted in discussing the first amendment. It seems to me, and the point has been made before, that we should be dealing with two separate bills. One of them should be a bill dealing with the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, and the other bill

should deal, of course, with the legislation dealt with in the rest of the bill before us.

I have listened to the government speakers, or at least to the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) who spoke prior to the lunch break. I did not hear him mention the specific amendment with which we are dealing. It seems to me that the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is a sound one. He is asking that allowances, which today are classed as expenses, are not taxed by the government and are not classed as income, should not be included as salary for pension purposes. I go along with this. The previous speaker indicated that there are other methods of increasing the pension. You can raise the percentage on the sessional indemnity of \$12,000. If an increase is warranted this is the way it should be done.

I, personally object very strongly to Members of Parliament setting such a poor precedent, not only for the House but for the whole country, by giving themselves special privileges in order to improve their own pensions. This is not right. Not only is it a poor precedent, it is mighty poor legislation. Surely, the government should realize this and should at least accept the amendment of my colleague. If they wish to increase the pension, they should increase the percentage on the \$12,000. However, to write a provision into this act and not to allow the same provision to be written into other pension acts is not good legislation and should not be allowed. It is not in the best interest of Members of Parliament or in the best interest of good government. We should not accept this type of foolish legislation.

• (3:00 p.m.)

I would like to say one or two words on the pension proper. I would be very happy to know that we had legislation on the statute books before us that would give adequate increases to our senior citizens and to our veterans. I would be happier dealing with this legislation if I knew the other type of legislation for senior citizens and veterans was on the way and would be passed in this session of Parliament. I believe most hon. members feel the same way about the present bill and about pensions in general.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to members describing their financial troubles, and there is no doubt that some hon. members are having financial difficulties. But I point out that there are hundreds of thou-