

*Government Orders*

It is not only members of the House of Commons, it is members of the legislatures; provincial magistrates in the province of Nova Scotia earn a full pension after 15 years.

I want to ask my colleague if he thinks it is fair that members of Parliament after a period of service or any other person during their working career should not be able to earn a pension which will more or less allow them to maintain the standard of living they have enjoyed through their careers for themselves and for the benefit of their families.

I know he is interested and concerned about indexing and I have no disagreement with what he said.

• (1800 )

However, I want him to focus on some of the remarks and comments that have been made by organizations like the National Citizens Coalition that focus on the most difficult of the cases and use those cases to detract from the basic idea that people, by way of deferred income, are entitled to some kind of benefit as they terminate their career and go into retirement.

I wonder if the hon. member and my good colleague is in any disagreement with the basic idea of the pension program.

**Mr. Nowlan:** I thank my hon. friend from Halifax West for his questions.

Earlier, in reply to the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader when he moved the order to put the question so we could not put any amendments, I offered a *dicta*, my thoughts about the pension.

It is academic to me, in view of my time and years here, therefore I feel the same embarrassment as other members in talking about our own pensions. So I certainly am glad that the President of the Privy Council has given some indication—I wish it was a tighter and more committed indication—about just what type of inquiry, when it was going to happen and who was going to do it, rather than just a letter that was easily accepted, because we are all nervous about the issue.

Two points on members' pensions. On the question of double-dipping, there is absolutely no justifiable reason why that should be allowed to continue.

The question then is do we grandfather it? There are good people who served under certain rules, and then we retroactively try to do something. I guess this is what the inquiry is going to find out about. But certainly for future situations I think that all members who are elected should appreciate that if they get a government job after they serve in this House of Commons they are not getting their pension from the government for their House of Commons service and also a pension from whatever Crown corporation or court they may be appointed to.

I cannot find anything to justify double-dipping in pensions. I was hoping that one of the amendments that was moved by the hon. member for Don Valley East might have been put so it would have been a clear indication to this inquiry not to fool around much with that because that can be disposed of.

In terms of pensions, I said earlier that there is an argument to be made for pensions to members vesting earlier than normal pension plans. As I said, my mother was very glad that Prime Minister Pearson was around to even include widows of members, because otherwise they would not have had a pension. After 40 years of public service my mother got the grand pension of \$104 a month.

I am fully aware of the concern with pensions. I think the public has been so bombarded by a lot of extreme situations, more in theory than in practice, that it automatically thinks all members are receiving pensions after six years and there are a great quantity of members out there who are drawing full pensions, which is not the reality at all. There are many ridings in which there has not been a member's pension paid for 40 to 50 years because members have been getting defeated all the time and/or they have been re-elected for quite a while and therefore pensions do not click in.

On the pension issue, that is something that certainly must be looked at. It is healthy in view of the public focus on this, the bad odium that we are all in about it, and perhaps the defensive attitude that we have about it that in effect some outside agency—I cannot think why a vote in the House of Commons would have hurt at all.

**Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East):** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I do want to question the member for Annapolis Valley—Hants because I can understand how frustrated he is with regard to the procedure of what