

Government Orders

In conclusion, because other members may want to comment, and this may not make me too popular with all members, I was away last week and I apologize for being away when this thing came up because I know things speed up here very much in the latter stages as we see the midnight sun and as summer seems to beckon. I understand that and I apologize because I knew when C-55 came that it would move fairly quickly normally. With all the tools of the government under new procedures it does move well normally. This debate should move pretty normally tonight and have the full expression of members.

I got my ire up when I read *Hansard* on Friday. This great House of Commons is exposed to public odium. We have the courage and intestinal fortitude to do so many things affecting so many other people. This bill affects all the public servants. It is the bible for the Public Service from coast to coast. It may seem pretty dry and pedantic but not to the RCMP, the armed services and the federal Public Services from coast to coast. I wanted to participate in this debate to show that it is just not the Public Service around the Ottawa area but that there are public servants from coast to coast affected by this bill. I have not received so much mail on an issue as this bill which is 159 pages. You are going to cut off debate after three speakers here in report stage.

I apologize to my constituents that I was away on Friday, but I was not prepared to accept what happened on Friday, after Private Members' Hour at three o'clock, when the House was even more empty than it is right now.

• (1270)

Under extended hours the House continued and I compliment the government for its Machiavellian delight and success in coming to some of the controversial issues in this bill, particularly members' salaries and pensions. It only takes five members to force a vote. We had five members stand to extend rights to the gay community. For those interested in that, it is a controversial subject and I give full credit to the member for Burnaby—Kingsway for having the honesty and the persistence in the things he believes in to force a vote for the provisions for the gay community. We had other amendments on which we forced a vote on things affecting members, Parliament and the Public Service.

I got my ire up and decided I was going to participate in this debate and do anything I could procedurally to force a vote. I really am beyond it because of time and because of age and the years I have been here. I felt that this House of Commons had to stand up for once and face the issue the hon. parliamentary secretary talks about. I do not care how well-intentioned the President of Privy Council is, whomever he may be. I accept the word of my hon. parliamentary secretary.

I could not believe how the leader of the NDP got seduced by these letters of intent from the President of the Treasury Board saying that Treasury Board was going to look after members' salaries and vesting and double-dipping later in the day.

We could not get five members to force a vote on some very good amendments by the member for Don Valley East and Edmonton Southeast. I was not here and for that I apologize.

On Monday night when we had all those votes at least it would have pin-pointed where members stood.

I can argue about pensions. Frankly, there has been a lot of misinformation on pensions. I am a person from a family in which a man put 40 years in public life and thank God Prime Minister Pearson got widows involved in the pensions for members. Therefore my mother got a pension of \$104. In my riding there has not been a pension for members for 47 years.

There is a Liberal member who sits pretty close to me from a riding in which there has not been a member's pension for 50 years because the members keep getting defeated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member will have an opportunity to debate.

An hon. member: Debate, not put motions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that is not possible. I would like to allow the hon. parliamentary secretary to rebut the hon. member's statement and then carry on with debate because we have now passed the time.

Mr. Nowlan: I would like the opportunity for an important debate in this Chamber for the next few hours because the government is going to move amendments and force the issue and we know the government has the numbers and all government members have stood. You cannot accept double-dipping. You can make an argument for pensions.