

I urge my hon. friends to the right to give a bit more thought to this proposition. What is proposed is a strait-jacket. It is a proposition that shackles our minimum wage people to a level of poverty from which they will never escape. As a matter of fact, I would rather trust the Governor in Council than tie the minimum wage to the consumer price index. At least the Governor in Council would be subject to some political pressures. There might be a few more members like the member from Sault Ste. Marie around in the Liberal caucus who might squawk from time to time, particularly at election time, and the government might be made to realize that this figure of \$1.75 should be boosted quite considerably. But if you adopt this formula, plausible though it sounds, all you do is keep the low paid people, the people on the minimum wage, at the same level of poverty that has been their experience.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, relying on the provisions of Standing Order 75(8) which permits an amendment to be made to a motion that has been put before the House at the report stage, I should like to move an amendment. I do so, and it is seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). It reads as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the words "by the ratio that" and by substituting therefor the following words: "the Earnings Index for the immediately preceding calendar year, as defined in the Canada Pension Plan, bears to the said Earnings Index for the year immediately prior thereto."

A while ago when we were discussing another bill that I shall not mention now, not just because of the rules but because it affects Members of Parliament, and there was a suggestion that there should be a formula regarding the salaries of Members of Parliament in the future, it was contended in some of the discussions that we had outside the House that there was no such thing as a wage index, or a statutory formulation of the wages and salaries of public servants to which a formula could be attached and used in the case of these salaries. That is the reason that in this amendment I do not use general words like "wage index." I use the two words "earnings index" which are defined in the Canada Pension Plan. Thus there is statutory provision for those words.

The general purpose behind the earnings index is that the escalation which is provided in the Canada Pension Plan during the working years of members of the plan is based on what happens to the average earnings of the working people of this country. That is what I would like to see happen for those on the minimum wage. I am taking this slowly, and am repeating myself hoping that I am making the point to my hon. friends to the right. They have got a good point in wanting a formula, in wanting this to happen automatically, but I plead with them that it is not good enough to match increases to what happens to the cost of living. Surely, the increases for the lower paid workers should match the average increases gained by all the other working people in Canada, and if all the other working people get increases that lead them to a rising standard of living, this formula should provide the same benefit for those living on the minimum wage.

#### *Canada Labour (Standards) Code*

I am sorry that we are still talking about a minimum wage of \$1.75. The \$2 that I offered earlier also was low. I must not get back into the debate that we had on the other amendment, but I hope the day will come when in our social progress we get away from this double standard, giving those at the top massive increases, and those at the bottom ten cent increases.

But if we are going to talk about automatic increases for those at the bottom, let the formula be one that gives those people raises proportionate to the average increases that all the other workers are getting. So, I present this amendment to the motion moved by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander). I even dare to hope that he might accept it. At any rate, now that I have moved the motion he can speak again and tell us what he thinks about it. But as I say, as between a formula that relies on the consumer price index, and relying on the Governor in Council, I prefer the Governor in Council. We can get at those who comprise that body. We can put pressure on them. But it seems to me we can do an ever better job by accepting the amendment that I have moved. I therefore present to you, Mr. Speaker, the amendment which I read a moment ago.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Before putting the amendment and hearing the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey), I might tell the House that I have some doubts about the procedural aspects of the amendment. My understanding of the motion presented by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) for the consideration of the House is that it proposes that the minimum hourly wage rate be related to the consumer price index. To my way of thinking, that is the essence of his proposal.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) proposes that the minimum hourly wage rate be related instead to the earnings index. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre may say that the essence of the motion proposed by the hon. member for Hamilton West is not that increases should be related to the consumer price index but that it should not be a fixed wage rate, that the wage rate should relate to some kind of formula. Of course, the point is subject to dispute. I would think that hon. members would want to have an opportunity to speak to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and indicate what their views might be, whether for or against it, not from a procedural standpoint but from a substantive standpoint. However, at first blush it appears to the Chair that the hon. member is putting a new question that might well be presented as a separate motion.

This having been said, and unless strong objections are taken—I note that the minister wants to rise. Is he rising on a point of order?

**Mr. Mackasey:** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to express the opinion that the amendment to the motion is out of order because, in essence, it could have been introduced earlier during the week. In my opinion it is hardly a true