

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1970

labour movement and I know that when I make the type of contribution I like to make my employer makes it too.

Some of my colleagues consider that a Member of Parliament should not retire on the amount of money on which we would retire under certain conditions. If they say I will retire on too large a pension, then they will have to tell me the reason it is too large is that the pension fund cannot carry such a pension. Then, I will say I still want that kind of return and am willing to put more money in in order to produce that type of a pension. It has been said it is wrong to have a large pension and not that there is anything wrong with developing a pension fund to cover it.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has made two points on which I should like to comment. One was that this should not have been brought in in this manner. I sympathize with the government on many occasions when it looks at the political facts of life and decides to do something. I do not blame the government for doing this, even though I may not necessarily like it. I sympathize with what they have done. I think from these votes we will see whether or not this measure is supported by a majority of the Members of Parliament. I really think it will be supported. Personally, I would like to see our pensions separated from other pensions because we maintain a separate fund. I believe it could be operated separately. It may be that very soon Members of Parliament will find that they will have to contribute more money.

The second point the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre made is that the \$6,000 was included as income. Personally, I think this is a great mistake. I see no legitimate reason for this. It really was not done by amalgamating the expense allowance and the salary. It was done in a loose way for the purposes of the pension. Before this report was made I recommended that the \$12,000 be considered as salary, and if it took 10½ per cent to produce the desired pension then we should use the 10½ per cent figure on the \$12,000 because I think we are stretching credibility if we consider the \$6,000 as salary for one purpose and an expense allowance for another purpose. I agree the two should be separated, but I do not agree that it would make any difference. It would only mean that the percentage from salary to give us the full pension would have been 10½ per cent rather than 7½ per cent. It would not mean a greater

[Mr. Peters.]

contribution in dollars, either by the government or the individual. We would still be paying approximately \$1,350 a year.

• (2:50 p.m.)

It seems to me that this pension is going to be fairly generous. It is probably in keeping with the salary we receive, which in terms of the general level of salaries in the country, is fairly generous. Therefore, in my opinion, it follows that what we have done in this regard is to bring the pension up to a reasonable level. Personally, I have known a great number of people who have retired on the previous pension. Hon. members should not forget that we only got around to receiving any kind of pension in 1952. Before that, I suppose, the wages of Members of Parliament were so low that they were not considered to be wages. They were probably more like the minister's clergyman's stipends and all they were supposed to do was to keep body and soul together. Members were not supposed to live on their indemnity.

When we passed the legislation in 1952 a pension was established which, in my opinion, was not satisfactory. It was mentioned here that M. J. Coldwell received a pension of \$3,000 after 17 years here.

Mr. Francis: I do not think it was that much.

Mr. Peters: Yes, after 17 years he received \$3,000. In those 17 years, he had not been connected with any industry or any educational institution. He was in no position to supplement his income when he was retired by his electors. This was not a voluntary retirement; he did not choose to retire at that time. He retired involuntarily and he did so after that many years of service for a salary that was probably \$1,000 below the poverty line and which certainly was not in keeping with the contribution he had made to Canada. I am informed by my colleague that M. J. Coldwell was here 23 years, which does not make the situation any better. For 23 years of service to Canada, surely the people of this country should have considered it fair to donate to him \$3,000 a year. Mr. Coldwell should not have had to contribute to a pension fund to receive that kind of money. I am sure there are many people in Canada who would have agreed that if the amount were doubled, and came directly out of the treasury, it would not have been too much.

My point is very simple. If this pension program that has been suggested by the gov-