

Motion for Adjournment

indeed. In dealing with the question of retired civil servants' pensions, the Vancouver Province has this to say in an editorial:

The New Democratic party has sound reasons for threatening to keep parliament sitting until legislation is introduced to increase the pensions of retired civil servants.

In view of the rising cost of almost everything, the tiny pensions given many former civil servants are a national disgrace.

I picked up a paper this morning, Mr. Speaker, and read that the cost of living index is up once again. The cost of food is up a full percentage point and the cost of clothing, rent and other essentials is again up, showing a steady rise. The editorial continues:

Finance minister Sharp last March disclosed the pension levels of Canada's 30,922 retired civil servants. At the lower end of the scale, 458 draw federal pensions of less than \$20 a month.

Pausing there, Mr. Speaker, may I say that these people have given their lives to this country by working in the civil service. I think it is an insult to suggest that these people are looked after by the addition of the old age security supplementary pension to their income. We are insulting our retired civil servants by failing to look after them better than this. We are also insulting the old people of this country by offering them this sort of pension. The article goes on:

At the higher, 2,382 get allowances of \$300 or more a month.

This is the argument used by people who are anxious to justify what the government has done in the matter of pensions.

In between, 28,082 draw pensions that range from a meagre \$30 a month—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am wondering whether the hon. member is not straying a little from the motion now before the house. It seemed to me that the first part of her argument was relevant, but perhaps she is now getting away from the subject before the house.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): With due respect, Mr. Speaker, that is why I do not want to go home until we have dealt with this question. I think this is exceedingly relevant. It is why I think that we as members of parliament are falling down on our duty. We are failing to do something for those people who have incomes of this type. However, I have nearly finished with the figures, and I believe they are very relevant.

Some hon. Members: Order.

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, may I inquire whether it is the figures that are wrong? I would point out that they are accurate.

Mr. Speaker: No, it is the hon. member who is out of order.

Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): I will skip the figures then and continue with the editorial. However, I must point out that 20 per cent of all retired civil servants receive between \$100 and \$150 a month. Now I have finished with the figures. The editorial continues:

Is this the way a nation with one of the world's highest living standards proposes to recompense its public servants for a lifetime of service? Do these cheese-paring allowances reflect Canada's grateful thanks?

Obviously not. A Public Service Alliance brief calling for wide improvements in civil service pensions has been endorsed by representatives of three political parties, including the government.

I am getting rather nervous now lest by continuing to read I will be out of order, so I will desist. I just want to say that in spite of the cynicism expressed by the minister a moment ago, there are members of the House of Commons of all parties who would willingly stay here for several days, if need be, if we could get action on this matter before we go home for our much needed respite in our own constituencies. There are members of the House of Commons who put their duty to the people of this country—the retired civil servants in this instance—ahead of their own holiday plans and who would cancel their plans to go home in order to stay here to deal with this matter. I do wish, Mr. Speaker, that members on the other side of the house would recognize that there are members in all parties, even their own, who would be glad to stay to deal with this matter.

I know I am not out of order, or I do not think I am, when I say that I feel sure that the work that has been done over the years by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) puts him way beyond the cackling that I hear from some quarters that this is a last minute move to seek political advantage. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has fought and fought and fought for this particular group of pensioners, and I feel that if by staying a little while longer we could get some action from the government we would feel a lot better when we go home. I am also sure that the government would on mature reflection feel a lot happier too, as well as feel a lot happier