

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

of us and say we are all behind this proposition. In recent weeks there have been members from the Cr ditistes, led by the hon. member for Abitibi (Mr. Laprise), also rising in support of this proposition. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Claude Edwards, president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, is in a position to say, as this release does say:

We are convinced that there is solid support for an increase in public service pensions among members of all parties in the House of Commons and we urge the government to bring forward legislation to increase public service pensions without further delay.

He also points out, as we all know, that there is a tremendous reserve of employee contributions in the superannuation fund. It is a fund that is growing every year and these employees do not see why some of that money, that at least is on the books, cannot be used to give them a touch of the just society.

The last time the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was drawn into saying more than a sentence or two on this issue was on October 11 when he answered a question put by the hon. member for Abitibi, as recorded at page 1084 of *Hansard*. This is what the Prime Minister said on that occasion:

It was answered last week, and I myself stated that the matter was under consideration. Indeed, there has been an exchange of correspondence between the representatives of the civil servants and myself; I indicated that we were not in a position to grant those increases now but that we would consider it as soon as possible.

I ask the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gray), how much longer do these people have to wait? How many more times do they have to be told that the matter is under consideration? The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) must know, Mr. Speaker, that no points of order are allowed on this late show, but if he is standing because he wants me to include his name as in favour of the proposition I will be glad to do so, and if other hon. members want to stand up to include their names I will be glad to put them on the list as well.

To the young, hopeful, parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance—he can interpret that “hopeful” any way he wants, and he comes from Windsor where there is keen interest in this matter—I say for heaven’s sake let us not have this stalling any more. Let us have action on behalf of these former employees, for whom an increase in their pensions was unanimously recommended by a joint committee of both houses of parliament on May 8, 1967.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. H. E. Gray (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the ever hopeful hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for what I take to be kind remarks expressed in my direction. I also want to thank him for confirming that interest in this particular problem is not confined to one particular political party. In fact it is one which engages the concern of members both on the government side and on the opposition sides of the house as well. I think this is important to note, because had I risen first and made this assertion, someone might have said that this is a form of self-serving evidence. But coming from the ever hopeful hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) this evening it confirms that I can join at this time and on future occasions with others regarding the concern that is felt on all sides of the house about this particular matter.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Now do something about it.

Mr. Gray: I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) would have wanted to be here to comment on this important matter himself. As hon. members know the budget is being presented tomorrow evening and he is involved in putting the finishing touches to his very important budget speech. In reply to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre I should like to say that the Minister of Finance on numerous occasions has expressed his sympathy and understanding for the retired civil servants.

Speaking personally I regret I can only say that at the present time this matter is under active consideration by the government. I should point out however that since 1963 Liberal governments have taken important steps to provide further help for the older Canadians, including superannuates. The basic old age pension has been increased to \$75 a month. Steps are being taken to make it available at age 65 by 1970. A guaranteed income supplement has been put into effect to provide an amount of up to \$30 a month for people on old age security pensions who have no other income. The federal government today guarantees to retired Canadians 65 years of age or over, including superannuates, \$107 a month. I think this is important to remember at this time.

I am not suggesting that superannuates do not continue to face financial problems. I am not suggesting that their request for increases and changes in the management of the superannuation fund are not worthy of serious