

Government Orders

In addition, unions may rest assured that the regulations of the Correctional Service program will not be developed without prior consultation.

The subject of consultation brings me now to the question of the stakeholder review. I have already indicated that Bill C-55 is one step in the Public Service reform process. The next step will be a review of the outstanding issues involved in the Public Service plans and the plan of members of Parliament.

Among the issues to be resolved for the Public Service plans are plan management, the rate of return to be credited to the funds, future inflation protection arrangements, and questions related to plan design including such things as conformity with the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act and the possible redesigning of survivors benefits. These are matters that were spoken about by witnesses before the committee.

As soon as Bill C-55 is passed, the president intends to meet with his advisory committee on the Public Service Superannuation Act to embark on the next step of the pension reform process. I know that the President of the Treasury Board is looking forward to working with representatives of the various stakeholders in the plan so that together they can come to a consensus and reach solutions that will be as satisfactory as possible to all parties concerned.

I therefore urge hon. members to expedite the passage of Bill C-55 so that we can implement the improvements it proposes and so that there will be no further delays in providing pension coverage for part-time employees, paying out the increased supplementary death benefits to the appropriate beneficiaries, or affording separated and divorced spouses a fair division of the pension benefits accrued under the federal plans.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, this bill has come to typify for many of us who have been involved intimately in every clause, every section and every word of it and in every moment of lengthy committee hearings and debate on the bill the approach of the government. It presents one thing and actually does another. It takes small improvements and surrounds them by a bush of unpleasant, unwelcomed and damaging changes. It looks after those who have the most but not those who have the least.

I want to go into some specifics to put some flesh on those contentions. Last December 10 the minister announced that there would be changes to the pension legislation. He announced that there would be improvements to remove some unfairnesses in the pension situation and that there would be changes to bring the act into conformity with the Income Tax Act. Nobody could disagree with those intentions. We as the Liberal Party did not disagree with those intentions and those principles at the time the bill was debated at second reading stage.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sorry to interrupt the member but I just want clarification. We are questioning the member who just spoke. I hope she is not starting her debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Under the Standing Orders there are no questions or comments. The first two speakers receive 40-minute speeches without questions or comments. Then we will go to the third speaker who will be from your party and who will get 20 minutes plus 10 minutes of questions and comments.

Mrs. Catterall: However, as the committee began its deliberations and finally had time to look at what the bill had to say, it became evident that the government had brought in some improvements to the bill as it had promised, some very minor improvements, but was then using this bill to hijack in a complete takeover of the management of the pension plan, contrary to the promises by the minister back in December that no changes would be made to the management of the pension plan except following a thorough and complete review in consultation with all the other stakeholders.

Those stakeholders include members of the Public Service who contribute 7.5 per cent of their income to their pension plans. It also includes hundreds of thousands of retired Public Service employees who collect benefits based on the contributions they made during their working years.

Despite the promise of the minister that any change in the management of the plan would be dealt with through a thorough and consultative review, this bill has been used to attempt to take over the management of the plan to an even greater degree than the government already does.