point is that I will be watching very closely to see how the government acts in respect of the changes proposed. I believe that half a loaf is better than none but I am afraid we are buying a pig in a poke. When the government comes to acting on this change in the regulations, having deleted two offensive sections, I hope it will leave it so that an individual who has earned a pension and has decided to work again for the government will be entitled to receive a full pension and not have it diminished in any way by regulation. I should now like to ask leave of the house to withdraw my notice of motion.

Mr. Chatterton: Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that I give my consent to the request of the hon. member, but that I will have something to say about the motion to which he has referred when it comes before us.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to withdraw motion No. 27 standing in his name?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Order discharged and motion withdrawn.

PENSIONS

SUGGESTED ADJUSTMENTS TO COMPENSATE FOR INCREASED LIVING COSTS

Hon. R. A. Bell (Carleton) moved:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should give the earliest possible consideration to the advisability of adjusting upwards the pensions of superannuated public servants and of superannuated members of the armed forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to take appropriate account of increases in the cost of living, increases in salary levels and other relevant factors occurring since the rates of pension of such persons were determined.

He said: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of members of this house who would have liked to speak on the last motion, including the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Chatterton), the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. McCleave), the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and myself. However, we are very glad indeed to have an opportunity of debating this particular motion.

Three times already during this session I have initiated debate on this issue and since I have no desire whatever to be repetitive my remarks will not be extended now so that other members will have ample opportunity to express their views. But this warning I proclaim; I intend to persist in pressing for rectification of the hardships and injustices visited upon the retired civil servants of this nation until this or a succeeding government acts and acts decisively.

So far this session the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) have adopted an adamant, yes, an inflexible and stubborn attitude. The first glimmer of hope came last Friday when the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Benson), in reply to a question from the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, suggested that the terms of reference of the special joint committee on the public service be extended to include this subject, and I wish to quote from page 6543 of *Hansard* where the minister is reported as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I certainly would have no objection to doing that providing the committee completes the huge amount of work it now has before it in considering four very complicated bills.

With that incentive I am sure the committee will be most willing to complete its work as rapidly as possible, and I suggest to the minister that this resolution might be referred to that committee. Indeed, I would welcome an amendment from the other side to that effect.

• (6:10 p.m.)

The hardships and the injustices of retired civil servants have been clearly demonstrated in many briefs presented to the government and in arguments in this chamber. Pensions paid for in hard dollars have been eroded by creeping inflation and, indeed, by not so creeping inflation. The dollars drawn in superannuation in many cases are worth less than 50 per cent of the dollars used to buy the benefits. Elderly people watch helplessly while their lifetime savings dwindle into insignificance. There is really only one issue before us in this chamber. Have the government and the people of Canada any obligation or responsibility to these retired civil servants of the crown or is it just a simple matter of contract between crown and servant and must the servant endure the dirty end of the contract?

I say, Mr. Speaker, that there is an obligation, a vital, blinding, moral obligation which this government cannot escape. The issue was really resolved in 1958 by the previous government when it enacted the pension adjustment act. This set a clear, unequivocal precedent. Basically what is needed is conformity to that precedent today, the updating and modernization of the legislation of the former