

*Government Orders*

I draw the hon. member's attention to the 1988 election. He was a Tory then and was working for a Tory member of Parliament who was seeking re-election and who was going to earn a pension. He may have already qualified for all I know. I do not know who he was working for in those days but he was very supportive of the whole thing. There was no public debate about pensions in 1988.

Many members who were elected at that time in good faith left their employment, took a reduction in the earnings they had on the basis of a certain salary that was stated to be the salary for members of Parliament plus the possibility of earning a pension at the conclusion of their term of service in the House of Commons.

The pension was generous. It is generous and remains generous. That is true. However the members of Parliament who entered the lists, as it were, for the election in 1988 and in all previous elections did so on the basis that at the end of their term of office they would be compensated in some way that was generous but was designed to make up for the loss of income they suffered in being elected to Parliament in the first place.

The hon. member is now saying that those people had expectations that were out of line, that they do not qualify to receive the pension to which they are entitled under the law. These people in the Reform Party want to change the law to prevent those persons from receiving those pensions.

I can understand their approach when only one of them has qualified for a pension, when only one of them was a successful candidate in 1988. In fact she lost in 1988 and then got elected in a subsequent byelection. There was not a single one of them in 1988 and they were not talking pensions big time during that election. It was a non-issue.

It was a non-issue for me in 1993. Nevertheless, the members of the Reform Party insist that members who were elected before are somehow pigs at the trough because they were elected under a system of remuneration which they are now accepting.

Most people enter a career looking at the remuneration package and seeing what it is like. When they are successful in either choosing the job or in this case getting elected to the job, they are then told by Reformers who come along later, Johnny come latelys if ever there were any, that somehow they are pigs at the trough because the remuneration package that they accepted when they started the employment is unacceptable to the new group.

First of all, that is a stupid argument. It is wrong. The members of the House who were duly elected on the basis of a package are entitled to receive the package they obtained.

What has the government done? It made two promises in 1993 to change that package. One was to prohibit double dipping and

the second one was to put a minimum age in place so that members would not draw a pension at an unduly young age.

The bill fully complies with those promises. The age change is there and the double dipping prohibition is there. The government went beyond that and reduced the rate at which the pension accrues which means members of Parliament who are elected on a certain remuneration package will in fact get less. That is a very significant change which is totally unappreciated by the members of the Reform Party for one good reason. They are all going to opt out.

• (1020)

I suggest the electorate will opt them out of the pension scheme. They will not qualify anyway. The only one that has qualified is the member for Beaver River. I suggest none of the others would qualify anyway.

The member for Beaver River has been on a rant on this issue for one good reason. She has been cheated out of her pension by her colleagues who have muzzled her, beaten her into the ground and forced her to opt out of the pension scheme so she can join their ranks. They will be taken away by the electorate anyway in the next election. They will not qualify but they have muzzled her into opting out so she is in a fit of rage.

She is the one, with her leader who asked for the opting out clause and now wants it taken out of this bill. She wants it removed from this bill because she wants her pension. She is having a fit because she cannot get her pension. I hear she is taking wrestling lessons in Calgary this weekend because she needs to be able to deal with her caucus colleagues. She is being wrestled to the ground.

I want to turn to one other aspect. We keep hearing we should cut the pension more. We have not gone far enough. However, we do not hear from the Reform Party that we should change the double dipping scheme more by preventing double dipping not just by people who take federal appointments but by those who are receiving another pension from another source. Why is that? Because there are at least three members on the other side who are earning substantial pensions from the Government of Canada.

**Mr. Morrison:** Federal?

**Mr. Milliken:** Yes, three of them are federal. They are getting big, fat military pensions and maybe others. They are pocketing that money while they sit in the House earning a salary. They do not talk about extending double dipping because their colleagues will feel it in the pocketbook. They should have more sympathy for the hon. member for Beaver River and let her express her own opinions without wrestling her into the ground on this issue.