

The Prime Minister is a marvellous wordsmith. Pensioners are out of the workforce and cannot bargain or strike for larger pensions. That is the truth. They are not part of a bargaining unit, whether public or private. Therefore, they must look to others to protect them, and those people are here in this Parliament. That is why we are here.

"They are not the cause of inflation", the Prime Minister said. That is recognition of the truth. They are not the cause of inflation, yet the Government is putting senior citizens, retired public servants and others—

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** And their widows.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):**—and their widows in the trenches of its fight against inflation.

Finally, the Prime Minister said that these pensioners are the victims of inflation. To quote him exactly, he said "they are its victims", and he is right.

Then came the clincher which was meant to convince Mr. Power and everyone who received the letter that the leader of the Government was a compassionate man leading a compassionate Party which was thoughtful about those senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, what was the clincher? This is what he stated:

We have an obligation to protect them.

He did not say that the obligation had to be in writing. He did not have to tell anyone that it had been discussed over the years and settled that there would be no unilateral change in pensions without consultation.

There cannot be one right-thinking Member in the House of Commons who honestly believes that the Government has the right to ride roughshod, without so much as a "fare-thee-well", over any person out of the workforce, whether that person is a Public Service pensioner or anyone else. That is the issue—trust. Do not let the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) hide behind the weasel words that there is nothing in writing. What a shameful position that is for him to take!

I do not argue that the pension plans of public servants ought not to be examined with other pension systems to ensure that there is justice, but I do not believe that, in order to build one's own house, one should take the bricks from the house of someone else. But that is what is happening today.

As long as there is breath in me, I intend to fight what I believe to be iniquitous legislation and I am proud that my Party joins me in this battle today.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Thacker:** How many tens of millions for the Hilton Hotel in Windsor?

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** One should consider the amount of money that the Government has spilled—

**Mr. Tobin:** Spill some my way.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):**—and the contracts that it states it cannot break. I was reminded by a retired public servant today that the Government did break the contract with its public servants or retired people. However, the Government

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says: "We cannot break the contract with Judd Buchanan concerning that parkland out in Banff. We cannot do that; that is a sacred contract. That is an agreement we cannot touch; but, of course, we can deal with the public servants." By golly, that is a written agreement, that is right.

A letter written to the Editor of the *Ottawa Citizen* presented the case as well as it could ever be presented, and I will read it. It states:

The refusal to honour indexing commitments for public servants would reduce the government deficit by less than \$60 million in the present fiscal year (based on an average contribution per pensioner of approximately \$450 less income tax). That is a substantial sum, but placed against a budget deficit of \$23 billion, it will not do much to reduce inflation.

What is really at stake is public trust and confidence in the government. While it may be politically opportune for the government to make public servants and public service pensioners "whipping boys" to divert attention from much more serious matters, the question is, who will be next? Will the Government decide to default on other contract commitments?

In the conduct of affairs, whether they be public or private, the "broader principle" is that there must be some rules for the game. Neither governments nor individuals should be allowed to change the rules to fit personal convenience. In that direction lies chaos and anarchy.

If every Member is present when the House votes on Bill C-133, it will pass. However, it can at least be delayed in order to consider the case appropriately as part of pension considerations as a whole in the country. My motion to delay for only six months is to allow for that appropriate discussion to take place. As I believe it is morally wrong for us to attack pensioners, I also believe it is morally wrong for us not to allow that consultation to take place.

Much has been made of the position in which the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) finds himself, and he finds himself in a pretty bad position as a result of loyalty to his Party. I suggest that he would not be in such a bad position if he and Hon. Members opposite would join to support this motion. I am confident that we will be joined by the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis); I am confident the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) will stand against it; I am confident that the Hon. Member for Hull (Mr. Isabelle) will stand against it; I am confident the Hon. Member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) will stand against it. I am confident of that. It does not detract at all from the principle of the Bill if other Members also stand against it. It is reasonable.

● (1200)

The Hon. Member for Don Valley West (Mr. Bosley) not a Member for the National Capital area, said in the House the other day that it was appropriate that this matter be integrated into the overall pension review, and I believe that that is so. This matter has not been debated or dealt with as merely a matter for the National Capital Region. I invite the public, as I invite my colleagues, to review the list of speakers at second reading, at committee stage and in our debate at report stage yesterday and in our debate today. They will find when they read it that the speakers against this bill are not confined to