

*Pensions*

that he has an idea which was used in the first place by Mr. Mackenzie King.

The other thought which occurred to me as a way to get extra days of service would be to send some of these people around the world, but make sure they go from west to east all the time, and every time they cross the international date-line they will get in an extra day. Maybe that would do it. The levity with which I suggested that is not to be charged against my support of the proposition that a way should be found to correct these cases, and I am with the hon. member in that respect. However, time is going on and I must not use it up.

● (1750)

I rise mainly to say, as the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East and as the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) know, since we are all members of the same committee, we are now dealing with Bill C-12 in which something far more serious faces us, namely, the loss of indexing of pensions for anyone between the ages of 55 and 60. The case has been made very well before us in the committee by representatives of the armed forces, of the RCMP, of the air traffic controllers and so on, that people who are forced to retire by the nature of their contracts or for health reasons, should not be denied the right of the early indexing of their pensions.

It has also been drawn to our attention, or we got this by asking questions, that the amount of money to be saved by cutting out this indexing is very small compared with the amount of money to be saved, for example, by cutting out the indexing that is possible on January 1 for persons who retire late in the year.

However, I am stretching the rule a bit by discussing here what we were discussing out in the committee, but it is relevant, and I think this is an opportunity for us to show to those who are concerned about this that some of us believe the whole question of denying indexing to persons who have to leave their employment because of the nature of a contract is unfair and should be reviewed. Even if it is difficult for the hon. member to sell his precise formula I hope he is winning support, and I hope the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich is winning support for the reconsideration of this bill in respect of unfair cases. I hope that among all of us we can do something to save this principle for those who are called upon to leave their positions early.

**Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief as I do not want to be the one to talk out this motion, and I certainly hope the government gives it serious consideration. I have noticed lately that there has been a downgrading of veterans' and servicemen's rights under this government. There have been many examples lately of delays in respect of veterans' appeals and applications for disability pension increases, many of which have to wait for six months to a year to be heard. In addition there has been an easing out of veterans from the civil service at age 55. There have been many sad cases of paraplegics, amputee veterans, being eased

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

out of their jobs. This is an indication of the double standard of this government in dealing with veterans and servicemen.

If you are a retired general you will likely be given an exhalted position in the government. The chief of staff who retired recently has been made the chairman of the CNR. He is probably drawing a \$35,000 a year pension and has now been given a \$75,000 a year job. I know of a lieutenant-general who retired recently and was given an executive position with Canada Air. I know of many colonels, generals and so forth, who are being taken back after retirement, as consultants. On the other hand the government is easing out paraplegics and fooling around with a couple of days when looking at some servicemen's pensions. This government very definitely has a double standard when dealing with veterans and servicemen. I hope it will give this motion very serious consideration. Let us get it to the committee, or wherever it has to go. Let the government give some evidence here that it is not out to downgrade veterans' and servicemen's rights.

**Mr. Lloyd Francis (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to join with those who have congratulated the mover of the motion on his general intent in focusing on some difficult cases under the administrative and escalation provisions of military pensions.

I want to make one fundamental point that has not been made. In reading the motion of the hon. member I find one part to be incomprehensible, and I question whether it is factually correct. The motion states in part:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation to amend the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act so that former Canadian armed forces personnel who must accept a release date calculated by the department and who find they are one, two or three days short of a completed full year of service, and therefore ineligible for benefits under the S.R.B.A. for that year and also do not benefit from compounding of the indexing factor for subsequent years—

That is the point on which I am in fundamental disagreement with the hon. member. As I understand it, if his provision were adopted, exactly the same amount would be paid one year later on the man's birthday, and what is at stake is the timing of the initial payment; whether it should be made in advance or later. I have conferred with people responsible for administering the act and I understand there is no loss in escalation over a period of time.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** But the compounding makes a difference.

**Mr. Francis:** With all due respect to the hon. member, I understand it is exactly the same amount. If a man were to retire on his 55th birthday with 30 years' service short of one day, under the hon. member's proposition it would be granted to him, whereas under the existing legislation on his 56th birthday exactly the same amount would be paid. In other words, the same amount would be paid in the two cases.

**An hon. Member:** No.

**Mr. Francis:** With all respect to the hon. member, I have talked with administrators of the plan and this is what I am