

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act (No. 2)

with the principle by trying to insult Members, as the President of the Treasury Board has done, by saying, "Fellows, come on board because we will recognize the six and five in terms of the 1 per cent contribution that people made. We will give a half per cent more so it will not be six and five, it will be 6.5 and 5.5"

This morning I heard a commentary which pointed out that the difference works out to \$3 per month. Almost before you were born, Mr. Speaker, and in my early adolescence, there was another Government of Liberals. Walter Harris, a great Canadian in the true Liberal sense, brought in a budget. He just added \$6 to the old age pension. The Government legitimately went down to defeat because of the "six buck boys".

We all know about Mount Rushmore National Park. Here we have the President of the Treasury Board whose face is carved—in the animate spirit that moves him—in chalk as if on Mount Rushmore. He is trying to delude certain Members on the other side who are faced with a legitimate problem—conscience versus loyalty to the Party. He is trying to seduce them in an insulting way with half a percentage point. That is how much he thinks of them. Three dollars a month—the price used to be 30 pieces of silver. Well, 30 pieces of silver today is more than \$3 a month. For \$3 of this Government's money he says, "Come on board. We have changed the Bill. It is no longer six and five. We are giving you half a percentage point more because there is a little different principle here. Some retired civil servants did help pay for an indexing clause." Thirty pieces of silver, or \$3 in the Government's price, is supposed to seduce Members to come on board without change.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier proposed some changes that the Government should consider. The motion that is before the House at the moment does not cut to the core of a Government. It does not mean that if it were adopted the Government would go down the drain and we would be fighting a winter election. As much as any of us love elections, winter is not necessarily a good time to have one.

The motion of the Hon. Member for Nepean-Carleton calls for a six month hoist. The Table officers might try to define what a six month hoist does to a bill. I was a Member of the House when another Prime Minister of the same governing party defied a vote on a tax bill and said it was not a vote of no confidence. So there is a way out for Members opposite faced with that dilemma. And they must face a dilemma if they have any political conscience at all.

You do not hit a little fellow when he is down, Mr. Speaker. Why should retired federal public servants who worked for the Government, believed in the Government and expected the Government to protect them, now be the guinea pigs because of economic conditions in the country and indeed, in the world? I will not try to lay all the blame on the Government, although I can lay a lot of it there. I do not care about blame. I care about the injustice, the inequity and the total anti-Liberal philosophy of Bill C-133 as it stands. It uses retired federal public servants as guinea pigs in order to introduce a psychology that six and five will be the salvation of all our economic ills.

When I spoke before six o'clock I referred to a "Season's Greetings" note sent out by the Federal Superannuates National Association of Nova Scotia. Members get oodles of paper coming across their desks. This is a mimeographed newsletter which, ironically, is financed by a New Horizons grant from Health and Welfare Canada. This is participatory democracy in a real way. It is an expenditure of public funds, but if they are to be spent, let the superannuates spend them. It is they who are going to get hit over the head if Bill C-133 goes through as it stands. This letter from the 16,000-odd superannuates of Nova Scotia presents their arguments against the Bill in summary form. They are as follows:

1. Our pensions, including indexation, are a form of deferred remuneration and should not be altered at the whim of government or without prior consultation.

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2. Considering the statements made in the last three issues of the Treasury Board publication, "Your Superannuation Plan", any reduction of full indexation is an outright breach of faith with those already retired.

3. The contributions made to the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Fund were mandatory—

This is the interesting thing which makes almost a lie of granite face from Mount Rushmore, the President of the Treasury Board. He started to play around with one-half of 1 per cent and to say that the one-half of 1 per cent was in effect a reward. He missed the whole object of the exercise. We all know that a 1 per cent payment from a federal Public Service salary will not pay for full indexation, but it is a form of insurance which they bought; it was part of the contract. Now this trustee of public funds will unilaterally change the contract and not give them their indexed pensions for which they have paid. Now he unilaterally says that they will be indexed at six and five. It has been said by other Members, more eloquently than I can say it, that if anyone else tried this they would be in criminal court for violating their trust to a trustee's account. That is the point in No. 3 in a simple form. The superannuates of Nova Scotia indicated:

3. The contributions made to the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Fund were mandatory and represented a form of insurance of our pensions against rising cost of living. We paid the premium, we are entitled to the product.

That says it all. They continued:

4. We understand that the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Fund is not sufficient in itself to pay for indexation of pensions, but we are entitled to a share of the excess earnings from the main fund, and if our share of excess earnings was credited to the SRBA there would be sufficient to pay full indexation.

5. Lastly, if government is allowed to meddle with the pension funds, then a very dangerous precedent is being set.

I agree with each of these five points. I think my time is coming to a close. Therefore, I will conclude in the usual manner, observing the House rules. If I do not observe the rules, Mr. Speaker will direct me to do so.

In conclusion, let me remind the House that we have the letter of the Prime Minister in 1977. If we are talking about a principle of indexation when pensioners are out of the work force and cannot bargain or strike for larger incomes, and if all that were true then, what has changed today in 1982 in terms of the principle of indexation? Many of us voted for Bill