

increase which may very well be against the law. We may have a situation where the Government of Canada proposes to proceed with a monitoring agency that is against the law.

I simply want some assurance from the minister that there are plans in place recognizing that this agency has to take effect within 36 days, that we can count on the fact there will be some kind of monitoring agency operating on April 16, and that it will be an agency sanctioned by law. Will the minister tell us whether there is consideration now in the Department of Justice of an amendment to the Economic Council of Canada legislation, or any other kind of legislation, that will ensure there will be some kind of agency sanctioned by law, so that this government will not again be breaking the law in its actions after the controls period?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Leader of the Official Opposition is not aware of the many alternatives to this problem. It is quite evident that the hon. member is getting excited for nothing. I just said that next week he will have his answer.

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POINT OF ORDER

MR. KNOWLES (WINNIPEG NORTH CENTRE)—INACCURACY OF PRESS REPORTS ON PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION INDEXING DEBATE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order which is related to a question asked a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier). May I say that although I have not mentioned it to them I feel sure the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) and the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) will support me in this point of order. Perhaps I can put my point of order in the form of a question.

Is there not some way that we in this House can make a humble request to the media to report accurately what goes on in this chamber, and if they fail to do so is there not some way we can make a humble request to the media to correct the mistakes they have made?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am in the position that already the telephone calls are coming to my office, and I expect to have 100 or 200 letters within the next few days arising out of misreporting of what went on in the House here yesterday.

The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Andras) made a clear statement about the indexing of pensions, which established the fact that, although bookkeeping changes are being made, the retired public servants who are on pension have no need to fear that their indexing is going to be cut or discontinued. Yet the media last night and this morning reported that maybe there will be indexing some years and other years there will not. The report was that in some cases it will be cut in half. All of this, as the President of the Treasury Board said

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today, arises from a failure to understand the situation. I think we all understood it here yesterday. The minister's statement was clear. My friend, the hon. member for Hamilton West, even though he had some criticism to make, recognized that indexing was being confirmed.

I emphasized the point, and pleaded yesterday with the press not to indulge in scare headlines. Everyone who took part agreed. All of those who took part yesterday in statements or in questions clearly understood. Now we have this misreporting which, as I say, has already started the phone calls to my office from distressed retired public servants in Ottawa, and the letters will come during the next few days.

When a question about this matter was asked earlier there were one or two jibes from this side as to whether we are going to raid the press or control the press, and the answer is no. All I am asking, Mr. Speaker, is this: is there not some way this House can appeal to the press and radio to report proceedings here correctly and, if they fail to do so, to correct those mistakes? Perhaps by raising this point of order I am making that appeal. I hope it has the support of my friends whom I have named. They and others are putting their hands up. They all want to support it. I think I could almost make a question of privilege of it because of the time it will take in the next few days answering telephone calls and letters to correct this very serious mistake. Perhaps the President of the Treasury Board could also support me in this point of order.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that we may have lost one of the components of the audience to which we are addressing our comments. I want to go on record as totally supporting the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), and hopefully this will be supported by the other parties in the House. In reading some of those headlines, and some of the front endings of those articles purporting to be news reports, I could not see any similarity between what went on in this House yesterday—not only what was stated, but what was implied by the attitudes portrayed by members of all parties in this House yesterday—and the so-called news reporting, which was not editorial reporting but was supposed to be factual.

This is an important matter. There are two constituents of this issue; the taxpayer who wants to be assured that the decisions are wise, and the pensioners who are depending for the future on certain understandings they have had. I think that many people have studied this matter for many, many weeks, and to choose out of the Tomenson-Alexander report, or anything that was said in this House yesterday, the worst possible scenario, and then even extend it beyond the possibility of practical implementation as to what is intended, is something that really should, in my view, be corrected voluntarily by the media who are dealing with these matters.

I could almost go on and say that other situations have developed of that nature, but I do hope they will listen this time, and I hope that this plea will be joined by other members of other parties.