

*Private Members' Business*

dealt with in Bill C-85. The President of the Treasury Board introduced the bill and it was passed. It was part of the pension adjustment bill.

The second definition of double dipping, which this bill addresses, is MPs elected while collecting a public pension. They are receiving in essence a pension from a position which I made reference to plus receiving their member of Parliament allowance.

For example, there is a former MLA in this assembly who receives a pension of approximately \$61,000 annually. He was elected to the House and receives a full salary as a member of Parliament as well. Therefore he is earning something in the order of \$165,000 for serving the public. This bill would take the \$61,000 pension and subtract it from the \$64,400 which is due to a member of Parliament, thereby only paying this person to continue to serve the public at the federal level his \$61,000 pension and \$3,400.

I will take the House through a bit of the history of double dipping in Canada. Prior to 1976 pensions of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, members of Parliament, the military and public servants were regulated by Parliament and the regulations were quite uneven. A former member of the military could not keep their pension if elected to Parliament, yet a civil servant could. It was also not possible for a former member of Parliament to join the public service and collect their pension. The rules did not allow for a level playing field. Certain occupations were eligible to collect pensions while working in another occupation, while others were not.

This was updated in 1976 but instead of preventing all public pensioners from drawing a salary and a public pension, the process was opened up to allow them to collect both. In hindsight this was a costly, unfair and unacceptable practice, as it is now, in light of our fiscal situation and in light of a significant increase in unemployment, in particular with young Canadians.

The purpose of a pension is to provide income to an individual in recognition of years of service. In essence it is a deferred income or a deferred benefit earned while working to be paid when one retires. It is meant to sustain retirees in a satisfactory manner during retirement. A public pension is provided by the taxpayers so that the retiree has a source of income.

The proposal I am putting forward through Bill C-314 is seen in other jurisdictions. For example, it is a policy with many school boards to deduct salaried earnings from retirees who go back to the classroom to teach so they are not double dipping, receiving a pension from the school board as well as receiving a full time salary—doing two things; double dipping in terms of getting double revenue for doing one job and also taking the job away from somebody who needs it much more than the person who is receiving a substantial pension.

This policy was established because school boards could not justify to the taxpayer that a teacher should be able to earn a salary from teaching when they claim to be retired from the very profession in which they are working.

• (1735)

The bill would save the House of Commons literally millions of dollars annually because the payroll would be reduced. As well, there are currently at least 60 members of Parliament who could be affected by the bill. The numbers are approximate, we do not know for sure. A number of Liberals, Bloc members and Reform members are currently receiving pensions from previous public service and collecting a full salary as members of Parliament. They fall into the categories of MLAs, MPPs, municipal politicians, teachers, military officers, peace officers and various and sundry civil servants.

Some are receiving generous pensions and others will be eligible soon for benefits while still serving as a member of Parliament. The bill reflects the fact that these individuals are continuing in their role of serving the public and should not be paid twice. They should not be considered retired from public life and then pursue a career as a member of Parliament and be paid twice to serve that very same public.

Many members of Parliament in most veins agree that serving Canada is an honour and a privilege. We should not abuse that privilege. All we do by receiving a public pension while being a member of Parliament receiving a full salary is add to the cynicism of the public by abusing the goodwill of the Canadian taxpayer.

Bill C-314 recognizes that despite the level of government there is only one taxpayer paying the salaries of MPs, retired municipal politicians and retired civil servants. If a retired person becomes a member of Parliament, that person should no longer be considered retired.

The government does not allow persons who are collecting unemployment insurance benefits to collect welfare benefits at the same time. We have this in other jurisdictions such as school boards and unemployment insurance. UI does not allow persons to collect unemployment insurance while holding a job either. If a person does this they are considered to be cheating the system. Why are members of Parliament exempt from this form of double dipping? In essence those of us who are receiving pensions could be considered cheaters on the taxpayers.

We cannot expect Canadians to tighten their belts with massive cutbacks to government programs while we receive a public pension and a public salary at the same time. Contributions members of Parliament would make in terms of savings could go toward a special fund.

For example, consider a member who makes \$61,000 in pension income. That \$61,000 could go to this fund which could be used on an annual basis to be paid directly on the deficit. This could provide very significant leadership to Canadians in the sense that the members who receive these pensions with this deduction from their MPs salary could use this fund annually