

What's up- Not our pension

The recent News Letter from the NS Pension Agency suggests you will be better off with the new government's initiatives on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). NSGREA's Executive find it insulting to expect a retired employee to believe that freezing ones CPI at 1.25% for each of the next 5 years and then putting a rider on the probability of something when the plan hits 110%, is ludicrous. The new government has decided to correct the under funded liability by what could be termed a stimulus package. They will borrow \$535 million to pay a paper debt. It's only logical to assume they will pay interest on this loan and then, to whom?

In freezing your CPI at 1.25% and should the CPI go to 3.25%, all 12,000 plus retirees will be contributing 2% toward the under funded liability. The contributors, employer (gov) and employee (union) will also continue their contributions at a frozen rate, as the pension is predicted to be 100% funded by Jan., 2011. So the taxpayer and ourselves will be the only ones that are affected. Imagine, after 25-35 years of contributing to our "deferred salary", we're now expected to contribute again toward our own pensions.

With recent MLA's resignation after serving maybe 10 years and then receiving a pension of \$54,000.00, it's no wonder the public believes our pension would be bigger after serving for 25-35 years. The average retirees' pension is \$17,363.00 per year. Right now, there are retirees who will qualify for the new government proposed tax rebate of \$240.00. Should these new proposals on CPI be passed, more retirees will qualify over the next 5 years.

NSGREA has been in existence for 25 years. In 1986, NSGREA negotiated with government our Extended Health Care Plan. During the "pension holidays" we negotiated full indexing for those retirees who had retired before indexing was in place. Given these facts, who should government be talking with on issues affecting our pension & welfare.

Where do we go from here, you may ask? Straight to the MLA's in your area, including contacting the Premier and Finance Minister. Another avenue NSGREA will be looking into is a court action relating to these changes in our CPI agreement. Question them on why retirees are the only ones, other than the taxpayer, but that's us too, who will have to pay again for our pension. Ask them how a social democratic party could betray retirees by changing the regulations they had been hired under and retired under. Ask them why a social democratic party would lower retirees' standard of living by freezing their pension. Feel free to inject your thoughts and remember to tell them we don't want our indexing changed.

NSGREA will be holding a Protest Rally at the Legislature Building in Halifax on May 3 at 1:30 pm. Region members outside Halifax can access the 4 to a car pool and the Association will cover the fuel cost to & from the rally. Region Presidents will be the coordinates so, please let them know. Contact the MLA's and let us know what you hear.

SEE YOU ON MONDAY, MAY 3rd.

Bernie LaRusic, President