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ANNUAL REPORT TO PARLIAMENT



Report on the Administration of the *Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act*

for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2009

Canada

Report on the Administration
of the *Supplementary Retirement
Benefits Act*

for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2009



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Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.
Governor General of Canada

Excellency:

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the annual *Report on the Administration of the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2009*.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

The Honourable Stockwell Day, P.C., M.P.
President of the Treasury Board

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This is the 39th annual report on the administration of the *Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act* (the Act), which came into force on April 1, 1970.

Supplementary Benefits

The Act makes it possible to provide supplementary benefits for recipients of pensions or allowances payable under the acts or regulations listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, as at March 31, 2009.

The original Supplementary Retirement Benefits Act of 1970 provided for increases in pensions of a maximum of 2 per cent per year. Indexing benefits were extended to employees who retired since 1952. The increases were payable at the age of 60, or earlier under specific conditions.

Effective January 1, 1974, the 2-per-cent ceiling on increases was removed, and an annual increase in pensions reflecting the full increase in the cost of living was permitted. The annual increase in pensions is payable starting in January of each year. This increase is based on the percentage increase in the average of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the 12 months ended on the preceding September 30 over the CPI average for the 12 months ended a year earlier.

The Act was amended in 1975 to permit interest to be paid on returns of contributions at a rate of 4 per cent, compounded annually.

Since 1982, the legislation has required that the increase payable in the first year after a person retires be pro-rated according to the number of complete months of retirement in the previous year.

In 1983 and 1984, the increases were limited to 6.5 and 5.5 per cent respectively, under amendments to the Act passed in 1983.

In 1992, the Act was amended because changes were being made to the statutes governing four federal public sector pension plans: the *Public Service Superannuation Act* (PSSA); the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act* (CFSA); the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act* (RCMPSA); and the *Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act* (MPRAA). The amendments meant that the Act did not apply to pensions payable under those statutes. Consequently, each of those statutes now permits increases in these pensions, which are determined as if they were under the Act. The amendments to the Act related to benefits payable under the PSSA, the CFSA, and the RCMPSA were made retroactive to April 1, 1991. Those related to the MPRAA became effective on January 1, 1992. For more information on these amendments, see the section titled “Funding.”

Funding

The Act establishes an account known as the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account (the Account) in the Accounts of Canada. Plan members who have not yet retired, except the Governor General, contribute to this account. The government matches these contributions.

Between April 1, 1970, and December 31, 1976, members contributed 0.5 per cent of their salary. Effective January 1, 1977, this rate was increased to 1 per cent.

Interest on the Account is payable at the end of each quarter. It is calculated monthly on the minimum balance in the Account at an interest rate that represents the yield on outstanding Government of Canada bonds having a term to maturity of five years, less one eighth of 1 per cent.

Before January 1, 1974, all supplementary benefits were charged to the Account. Since that date, however, the benefits paid to former contributors have been charged to the Account only until they equal the total amount credited to the Account. Supplementary benefits paid in excess of that total are charged to government expenditures.

Under the 1992 amendments mentioned in the preceding section, the appropriate portions of the Account were transferred to the superannuation accounts established under the PSSA, the CFSA, the RCMP SA, and the MPRAA. These transfers greatly reduced the size of the Account.

Account Transactions and Membership Statistics

The pension benefits were increased (indexed) by 2.5 per cent in January 2009 (1.8 per cent in January 2008).

During fiscal year 2008–09, total receipts from contributors and the government, including interest, amounted to \$9.8 million. The total amount paid under the Act was \$43.229 million, of which \$20,236 was charged to the Account; the remaining \$43.209 million was charged to government expenditures, in accordance with subsection 8(2) of the Act. The balance in the Account at the end of the year was \$149.9 million.

Details of the transactions in the Account during the fiscal year appear in tables 1 and 2.

On March 31, 2009, there were 1,089 contributors to the Account and 1,750 beneficiaries.

Table 1

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account (in thousands of dollars)

	2008-09	2007-08
Opening Balance	140,076	129,249
Receipts		
Contributions		
– Members	2,811	2,684
– Government	2,810	2,730
Interest	<u>4,181</u>	<u>5,433</u>
Total Receipts	9,802	10,847
Payments		
Annuities	43,229	41,886
Less charges to government expenditures in accordance with subsection 8(2) of the Act	<u>43,209</u>	<u>41,867</u>
Net Payments	20	19
Increase	9,782	10,828
Closing Balance	149,858	140,077

Table 2

Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account

Details of Receipts and Payments for 2008–09 (in thousands of dollars)

	Judges	Others	Total
Balance as at March 31, 2008	139,584	492	140,076
Receipts			
Contributions			
– Members	2,794	17	2,811
– Government	2,794	16	2,810
Interest	4,166	15	4,181
Total Receipts	9,754	48	9,802
Payments			
Annuities ¹	–	20	20
Return of Contributions	–	–	–
Total Payments	–	20	20
Increase (Decrease)	9,754	28	9,782
Balance as at March 31, 2009	149,338	520	149,858

1. In addition to these charges to the Account, \$43.209 million was charged to government expenditures under subsection 8(2) of the Act.