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Report on the Administration of the *Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act*

for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2010





**Report on the Administration of
the *Members of Parliament
Retiring Allowances Act***

for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2010

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His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, 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 Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2010*.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

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Introduction

The *Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act* (the Act) governs pension arrangements for members of Parliament—members of the Senate and of the House of Commons. Under the Act, the pension plan also provides a survivor allowance for eligible spouses and children. This report begins with a summary of the plan’s main provisions and then presents information, for the fiscal year 2009–10, on the transactions recorded in the pension plan accounts, on membership, and on benefits paid. Historical data are also included.

In this report, “members” refers to active and retired participants in the plan. Where necessary, members of the Senate and of the House of Commons are referred to separately.

Funding

Accounts

Two accounts are maintained in the Public Accounts of Canada to record transactions under the plan: the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances (MPRA) Account and the Members of Parliament Retirement Compensation Arrangements (MPRCA) Account.

The MPRA Account records the transactions related to the benefits payable under the plan when these benefits accord with income tax rules for registered pension plans. The MPRCA Account records the transactions related to the benefits payable under the plan when the benefits exceed the limits imposed by tax rules.

The MPRCA Account is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and a transfer is made annually between the MPRCA Account and CRA either to remit a 50-per-cent refundable tax in respect of the net contributions and interest credits or to credit a reimbursement based on the net benefit payments. For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010, the MPRCA Account has paid to CRA an amount of \$15.7 million.

Tables 1 to 4 in this report present current and historical data on the MPRA and MPRCA accounts.

Members’ contributions

Effective January 1, 2001, the contribution rate for members of the Senate remained unchanged at 7 per cent while the contribution rate for members of the House of Commons was reduced from 9 per cent to 7 per cent of their sessional indemnities.

Some members, such as the prime minister, speakers, ministers, leaders of the opposition, parliamentary secretaries, and so forth, receive additional allowances and salaries for their service. These members must contribute to the plan, based on these additional allowances and salaries, unless they elect not to make such contributions or to contribute at a lower rate.

The prime minister must contribute 7 per cent of the salary paid to him or her as prime minister in addition to the contributions required from that individual for his or her role as a member of the House of Commons. If eligible, a member can decide to contribute for prior service in Parliament, in which case the member must pay interest on past service contributions.

Government contributions

On a monthly basis, the government is required to contribute an amount to each account, after taking into account members' contributions, to fund the costs of all future benefits that members have earned during that month. The government contribution rate for each account varies from year to year and can be expressed as a multiple of members' contributions. The ratios of government contributions to members' contributions for the calendar years 2010 and 2009 are as follows:

Government Contributions as a Multiple of Members' Contributions

	2010	2009
Senate		
MPRA Account	3.55	3.43
MPRCA Account	4.66	4.55
House of Commons		
MPRA Account	4.10	3.84
MPRCA Account	7.60	7.19

Interest

Every quarter, the government credits interest on the balance of each account at a rate set by the regulations. For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010, interest amounts were credited quarterly at a rate of 2.5 per cent on the balance of the MPRA Account and the MPRCA Account.

Future unfunded liabilities

When the government identifies an unfunded actuarial liability in either the MPRA Account or the MPRCA Account following the tabling of an actuarial valuation report in Parliament, the government must, over a prescribed period, credit to the Account such amounts that, after the prescribed period, would cover the unfunded actuarial liability identified.

Allowances and Other Benefits

Annual allowance

Members

Upon ceasing to be a member of Parliament, plan members are entitled to an annual allowance after they have contributed to the plan for at least six years. For service up to and including July 12, 1995, former members are entitled to an immediate annual allowance. For service after that date, former members are not entitled to an annual allowance until they are 55.

The benefit accrual rate for senators is 3 per cent per year of service to a maximum of 75 per cent of the average sessional indemnity. For members of the House of Commons, the accrual rate is 5 per cent per year of service up to and including July 12, 1995; 4 per cent per year of service after that date until December 31, 2000; and 3 per cent per year of service effective January 1, 2001, to a maximum of 75 per cent of the average sessional indemnity. Effective January 1, 2001, the annual allowance is based on members' average sessional indemnity for the best five years. Prior to that date, the annual allowance was based on the average sessional indemnity for the best six years.

The annual allowance of a retired member is suspended if that person becomes a member again, either of the Senate or the House of Commons. The annual allowance of a retired member of the Senate or the House of Commons is suspended if that person starts working for the federal government and remuneration exceeds \$5,000 per year.

Prime minister

During an individual's tenure as prime minister, the incumbent must contribute for at least four years if this service is to be eligible for an allowance. The allowance will be paid once the prime minister is no longer a member of Parliament or is 65 years old, whichever comes later. The allowance is equal to two thirds of the annual salary payable to a prime minister at the time the payment of the allowance begins.

Withdrawal allowance

Some members may get a withdrawal allowance. This is a return of a member's contributions, along with interest on those contributions, at a rate set by the regulations. Members receive withdrawal allowances if they do not complete six years of contributory service, if they leave the Senate by reason of disqualification, or if they are expelled from the House of Commons.

Survivor allowance

Members

Eligible survivors and children of members may receive an allowance.

For eligible survivors, this allowance is equal to three fifths of the basic annual allowance that the member would have been entitled to receive, or that the retired member was receiving, immediately before his or her death.

Children of members who are under the age of 18 or full-time students between 18 and 25 years of age are also entitled to an allowance. This allowance is equal to one tenth of the member's basic annual allowance or two tenths if no allowance is being paid to an eligible survivor as defined in the legislation.

Prime minister

An eligible survivor receives an allowance equal to one half of the allowance payable to a former prime minister for service as prime minister. While the prime minister must contribute 7 per cent of the salary paid to him or her as prime minister in addition to the contributions as a member of the House of Commons, a survivor allowance is paid to a spouse and not to the children of a former prime minister.

Indexing

Allowances to retired members and survivors are adjusted at the beginning of each calendar year. This adjustment corresponds to the percentage increase in the average of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the 12-month period ended September 30 over the CPI average for the same 12-month period of the previous year.

Indexing payments do not begin until the former member is 60 years old; however, once indexing begins, payments reflect the cumulative increase in the CPI since the member left Parliament.

Survivor allowances are indexed immediately based on the date a member left Parliament.

Minimum benefit

When a member or retired member dies and there are no survivors entitled to an allowance, the member's estate receives the amount by which the member's contributions exceed any allowances already paid.

Contributors

At March 31, 2010, there were 413 members contributing under the plan, and there were no vacant seats in the House of Commons. Tables 5 and 6 in this report present information on the number and distribution of allowances.

Statistical Tables

Table 1

Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Account, Year Ended March 31 (\$ dollars)

	2010	2009
Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Account, Opening Balance	562,661,375	523,098,300
Receipts and Other Credits		
Members' contributions, current	1,777,504	1,654,696
Government contributions, current	6,800,618	6,065,645
Members' contributions, arrears on principal, interest, and mortality insurance	43,731	35,485
Government contributions on amounts payable (elections)	—	—
Interest	57,879,875	53,771,144
Transfer from the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account	—	—
Actuarial liability adjustment	—	—
Total Receipts	66,501,728	61,526,970
Payments and Other Charges		
Annual allowances	22,448,720	21,404,062
Withdrawal allowances including interest	—	366,813
Pension division payments	—	193,020
Transfers to Public Service Superannuation Account	—	—
Total Payments	22,448,720	21,963,895
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	44,053,008	39,563,075
Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Account, Closing Balance	606,714,383	562,661,375

Table 2

Members of Parliament Retirement Compensation Arrangements Account, Year Ended March 31 (\$ dollars)

	2010	2009
Members of Parliament Retirement Compensation Arrangements Account, Opening Balance	181,228,970	165,999,787
Receipts and Other Credits		
Members' contributions, current	2,681,546	2,611,407
Government contributions, current	18,071,572	17,921,071
Members' contributions, arrears on principal, interest, and mortality insurance	29,427	32,820
Interest	19,272,737	17,734,300
Actuarial liability adjustment	600,000	600,000
Total Receipts	40,655,282	38,899,598
Payments and Other Charges		
Annual allowances	8,697,147	7,431,275
Withdrawal allowances plus interest	30,562	604,608
Pension division payments	—	196,516
Refundable tax ¹	15,693,048	15,438,016
Total Payments	24,420,757	23,670,415
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	16,234,525	15,229,183
Members of Parliament Retirement Compensation Arrangements Account, Closing Balance	197,463,495	181,228,970

1. A refundable tax equal to 50 per cent of contributions and interest credited to the MPRCA Account, less 50 per cent of benefits paid out of the account, must be remitted each year to CRA.

Table 3
Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Account
Comparative Data—November 20, 1952 to March 31, 2010 (\$ dollars)

Period / Fiscal Year	Members' Contributions ¹	Government Contributions	Interest	Actuarial and Other		Total Receipts	Annual Allowances	Withdrawal Allowances	Transfers to PSS ⁴ Account	Total Payments	Account Balance
				Accounting Adjustments							
1952-1989	26,299,441	25,786,913	22,917,200	—	—	75,003,554	41,114,724	4,365,056	269,623	45,749,403	29,254,221
1989-90	2,267,074	2,082,958	2,960,449	—	—	7,310,481	6,197,822	124,942	24,593	6,347,357	30,217,345
1990-91	2,305,080	2,175,581	3,059,384	—	—	7,540,045	6,368,934	27,364	—	6,396,298	31,361,092
1991-92	2,060,258	2,220,659	3,440,449	167,941,788 ²	—	175,663,154	7,187,271	7,339	—	7,194,610	199,829,636
1992-93	1,042,520	2,131,335	20,493,768	—	—	23,667,623	9,813,446	17,221	—	9,830,667	213,666,592
1993-94	1,048,643	2,064,761	21,882,703	—	—	24,996,107	12,084,079	1,852,076	—	13,936,155	224,726,544
1994-95	1,070,539	1,884,100	22,861,864	—	—	25,816,503	15,432,287	58,833	—	15,491,120	235,051,927
1995-96	990,505	1,685,476	23,933,398	—	—	26,609,379	14,947,496	936,723	—	15,884,219	245,777,087
1996-97	876,577	1,561,870	25,029,451	—	—	27,467,898	15,000,643	138,516 ³	—	15,139,159	258,105,826
1997-98	941,060	1,707,658	26,262,499	—	—	28,911,217	15,251,902	840,524 ³	—	16,092,426	270,924,617
1998-99	1,081,944	2,261,569	27,620,578	—	—	30,964,111	15,211,454	673,914 ³	—	15,885,368	286,003,360
1999-2000	1,054,926	2,673,500	29,409,145	—	—	33,137,571	15,311,534	680,015 ³	—	15,991,549	303,149,382
2000-01	1,582,118	2,882,101	31,014,334	—	—	35,478,553	15,514,009	405,499 ³	—	15,919,508	322,708,427
2001-02	1,366,802	3,847,838	33,226,180	—	—	38,440,820	15,993,470	154,314 ³	—	16,147,784	345,001,463
2002-03	1,340,110	4,395,891	35,221,387	—	—	40,957,388	16,623,728	846,514 ³	—	17,470,242	368,488,609
2003-04	1,100,713	4,557,315	37,822,796	—	—	43,480,824	16,551,392	862,213 ³	—	17,413,605	394,555,828
2004-05	1,361,109	4,780,613	40,502,434	—	—	46,644,156	18,108,177	566,431 ³	—	18,674,608	422,525,376
2005-06	1,600,703	5,226,747	43,384,988	—	—	50,212,438	18,977,081	311,777 ³	188,576	19,477,434	453,260,380
2006-07	1,653,756	5,355,841	46,554,638	—	—	53,564,235	20,017,711	149,303 ³	—	20,167,014	486,657,601
2007-08	1,635,495	5,592,419	50,003,648	—	—	57,231,562	20,530,863	260,000 ³	—	20,790,863	523,098,300
2008-09	1,690,181	6,065,645	53,771,144	—	—	61,526,970	21,404,062	559,833 ³	—	21,963,895	562,661,375
2009-10	1,821,235	6,800,618	57,879,875	—	—	66,501,728	22,448,720	—	—	24,448,720	606,714,383

1. Includes contributions for current and prior service and interest paid by members.
2. Includes a transfer of \$9,941,788 from the Supplementary Retirement Benefits Account and an actuarial adjustment credit of \$158,000,000.
3. Includes pension division payments and interest on withdrawal allowances.
4. PSS stands for Public Service Superannuation.

Table 4
Members of Parliament Retirement Compensation Arrangements Account
Comparative Data—January 1, 1992 to March 31, 2010 (\$ dollars)

Period / Fiscal Year	Members' Contributions	Government Contributions	Interest	Actuarial Accounting Adjustments	Total Receipts	Annual Allowances	Withdrawal Allowances	Refundable Tax	Total Payments	Account Balance
1992-93	1,944,720	13,837,316	806,119	—	16,588,155	71,198	3,901	6,516,391	6,591,490	9,996,665
1993-94	1,553,821	10,394,866	1,487,793	—	13,436,480	391,546	571,762	6,637,345	7,600,653	15,832,492
1994-95	1,610,329	9,058,349	2,025,049	—	12,693,727	727,802	27,755	5,807,226	6,562,783	21,963,436
1995-96	1,246,927	5,971,846	2,563,705	—	9,782,478	762,478	574,632 ¹	4,808,645	6,145,755	25,600,159
1996-97	1,074,385	4,944,660	2,853,534	—	8,872,579	772,012	57,167 ¹	3,884,619	4,713,798	29,758,940
1997-98	1,147,880	5,410,244	3,257,976	—	9,816,100	954,739	718,385 ¹	3,982,375	5,655,499	33,919,541
1998-99	1,353,367	6,816,386	3,769,294	—	11,939,047	976,109	113,933 ¹	5,101,490	6,191,532	39,667,056
1999-2000	1,248,721	7,397,670	4,458,146	—	13,104,537	1,017,774	464,361 ¹	5,790,772	7,272,907	45,498,686
2000-01	1,812,679	7,831,603	5,031,774	—	14,676,056	1,113,039	207,462 ¹	6,460,747	7,781,248	52,393,494
2001-02	2,448,630	15,269,084	6,396,263	—	24,113,977	1,368,096	448,629 ¹	10,049,942	11,866,667	64,640,804
2002-03	2,571,907	15,859,000	7,248,223	9,773,275	35,452,405	1,445,396	412,384 ¹	10,982,904	12,840,684	87,252,525
2003-04	2,925,422	16,921,883	9,979,113	9,773,275	39,599,693	1,529,508	523,313 ¹	17,926,813	19,979,634	106,872,584
2004-05	2,629,786 ²	16,297,793	11,702,344	9,645,766	40,275,688	3,254,354	441,259 ¹	17,944,084	21,639,697	125,508,575
2005-06	2,755,607 ²	16,529,339	13,591,352	5,708,760	38,585,058	4,113,948	980,709 ¹	18,223,501	23,318,158	140,775,475
2006-07	2,663,652 ²	16,178,865	15,103,392	—	33,945,909	5,886,618	211,517 ¹	13,540,275	19,638,410	155,082,974
2007-08	2,579,374 ²	16,480,107	16,501,512	—	35,560,993	6,281,662	43,987 ¹	18,318,531	24,644,180	165,999,787
2008-09	2,644,227 ²	17,921,071	17,734,300	600,000	38,899,598	7,431,275	801,124 ¹	15,438,016	23,670,415	181,228,970
2009-10	2,710,973 ²	18,071,572	19,272,737	600,000	40,655,282	8,697,147	30,562 ¹	15,693,048	24,420,757	197,463,495

1. Includes pension division payments plus interest on withdrawal allowances.

2. Includes contributions for current and prior service and interest paid by members.

Table 5

New and Past Allowances for the Fiscal Year 2009–10

1. a) The following 31 new allowances became payable:

- 11 to former members of the Senate
- 3 to the survivors of former members of the Senate
- 8 to former members of the House of Commons
- 2 to former members of the House of Commons whose allowances were reinstated
- 7 to survivors of former members of the House of Commons

b) Withdrawal allowances (i.e., return of members' contributions with interest) were paid in respect of 0 members of the House of Commons and 1 members of the Senate who retired.

2. The following 29 allowances ceased to be payable:

a) to 26 persons who died:

- 5 former members of the Senate
- 2 survivors of former members of the Senate
- 12 former members of the House of Commons
- 7 survivors of former members of the House of Commons

b) to 3 persons whose allowances ceased to be payable for the reasons given below:

- 1 to the child of a former member of the Senate whose allowance was suspended due to age
- 1 to the child of a former member of the House of Commons whose student allowance was suspended
- 0 to former member of the House of Commons who transferred to the Senate
- 0 to former member of the House of Commons who was re-elected to Parliament
- 1 to former member of the House of Commons suspended re: Bill C85

Since the Act came into force on November 20, 1952, a total of 1,421 annual allowances and 916 withdrawal allowances have been authorized.

The distribution of annual allowances in pay (including applicable indexation) at March 31, 2010, was as follows:

Table 6

Distribution of Annual Allowances in Pay

Amount of Allowance (\$)	Former Members	Survivors	Dependant Children/Students	Total
70,000 and over	117	1	—	118
65,000–69,999	28	1	—	29
60,000–64,999	46	—	—	46
55,000–59,999	23	2	—	25
50,000–54,999	36	3	—	39
45,000–49,999	26	8	—	34
40,000–44,999	46	13	—	59
35,000–39,999	45	25	—	70
30,000–34,999	35	10	—	45
25,000–29,999	28	22	—	50
20,000–24,999	27	23	—	50
15,000–19,999	19	16	—	35
10,000–14,999	15	19	—	34
5,000–9,999	11	13	—	24
Up to 4,999	1	—	4	5
Totals	503	156	4	663

Notes: Included in the above allowances, two former members were in receipt of an indexed annual allowance for service as prime minister.

The average annual allowance, including indexation, was \$56,512 for former members of the Senate and \$53,586 for former members of the House of Commons.

There were 20 former members of the Senate and 97 former members of the House of Commons who received an annual pension, including indexing and MPRCA, exceeding \$70,000.