

Hon Sir ROGER DOUGLAS (ACT): ACT supports the general thrust of this bill, and supports its referral to a select committee. I thank the Minister for Social Development and Employment, Paula Bennett, for her ready response to my request for additional information relating to this bill. I raised with her what I believe could be seen as—potentially at least—one or two unfair aspects of this bill, and I take the opportunity to raise them in the House.

I take the example of a New Zealander who has worked here for 45 years, between the ages of 20 years and 65 years. If that person retires and goes to Thailand to live, under this bill that person will get a 100 percent superannuation payment, and that seems a reasonable provision. If we take the example of someone from a Pacific Island country who works in New Zealand for 20 years—240 months—or more, then returns home, that person will also get 100 percent of his or her superannuation rights. On the other hand, if we take the example of a New Zealander who was born in New Zealand, who worked in New Zealand from, say, the age of 20 to 65—for 45 years—and who moves to Australia, that person could get zero superannuation payment, as a result of the reciprocal social security agreement we have with Australia.

In other words, a New Zealander who has worked for 45 years and then lives in Thailand will get a full superannuation right, another person who has come from one of the islands, and worked here for 20 years or more then returned home will also get 100 percent, but a New Zealander who has lived in New Zealand for 65 years and worked here for 45 years, who has a few assets or has a bit of other income, and who goes to Australia, will get absolutely zero, because of the social security agreement we have with Australia. Such people will get zero from New Zealand, but also they will get zero from Australia. In other words, they will get no pension whatsoever.

I think a lot of New Zealanders will see that as an anomaly that we need to address. Why should it be that if one goes to Thailand or a Pacific Island, one gets 100 percent of one's pension, yet if one goes to Australia—or, potentially, to other countries with which we have social security agreements—under the arrangements we have made with Australia one receives no superannuation, at all?

I have raised that issue with the Minister, and I thank her for the information she has given me. She has been very open. But I think the issue should be addressed and thought about at the select committee.