

Canada Pension Plan

and Welfare pursuant to this act or any regulation may be made available to an officer, clerk or employee in the Department of National Revenue, the Department of Finance, the unemployment insurance commission, the department of insurance or the dominion bureau of statistics where it is necessary to do so for the purposes of the administration of this act.

In other words, there is quite an opening here for different government agencies to have access to the information about which the hon. member for Northwest Territories is a little jealous.

Mr. Rhéaume: I am not jealous; I am concerned.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, I would rather leave this till we get to clause 107. This is really quite restrictive in nature.

I did omit something when I was mentioning the confidentiality of the information obtained by my department, which is basically responsible for keeping track of the contributions of each person in the country. Where there are dual contributors—that is, contributors to a provincial plan in a province not a party to the Canada pension plan, and to the Canada pension plan—there is provision for the transfer of information with regard to the computation of benefits, which I believe is dealt with in clause 108 of the bill.

Mr. Stenson: Mr. Chairman, do I understand that everyone will be forced to have a social security number to participate in the Canada pension plan?

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that this is taking the wrong view about this matter. This is a program which is there for people who, one must remember, cannot get pension provisions anywhere else. Something like 40 per cent of the people are all who can be covered by private plans. It seems to me that all members of this house voted for this plan as a matter of principle because they thought that a plan should be available through federal legislation which would provide an opportunity to people in this country who could not otherwise find one to put something away for their own latter day pension. Certainly this is compulsory, because you need that broad base for the operation of a state plan; but this gives an opportunity to people to buy pensions. The only way this can be arranged when dealing with such tremendous numbers of people is through a system which is based on numbers. It just cannot be done by names or alphabetically; you have to have a numbering system. Therefore, everyone who either files a statement

[Mr. Skoreyko.]

of national revenue or has a social insurance number issued by the Department of Labour and the U.I.C. will have a number for this purpose, and this number will be available when people come up to the age where they start making contributions. This number is given them for social insurance purposes.

Mr. Stenson: So everyone will need a number then?

Miss LaMarsh: Everyone who makes a contribution and gets a benefit, yes.

Mr. Stenson: Will everyone in the province of Quebec be required to have a number?

Miss LaMarsh: This was dealt with by my colleague a moment or two ago, and I am sorry you were not in the house at the time. It was pointed out that last year, when the unemployment insurance commission started this national program, more than six million people came into it voluntarily or involuntarily. The number was intended to apply all across Canada. This numbering system will be available to all individuals in Quebec, so Quebec will not have to institute a separate numbering system. As my colleague the Minister of Labour indicated, they are all included under the one master numbering system which is applicable to the whole of Canada.

Mr. Winkler: Is the system compulsory?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, there is one pertinent point that should be brought out at this time. In Canada we have 6,500,000 taxpayers at this time. With the change in the unemployment numbering system and with the advent of the social security numbering system there are now 6,314,000 individuals who have numbers either as a result of the change in the unemployment insurance numbering system or because they voluntarily agreed to accept a social insurance number.

Mr. Pascoe: Mr. Chairman, my question may sound a bit facetious, but I assure you it is not. I have been asked this question many times and for that reason should like to pose it for the minister. Will these pension cheques be endorsed by the use of a social security number or by signature? I have been asked that question quite seriously.

An hon. Member: There is no need to answer that question.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss La-