

reading in view of the importance of this bill to himself and to many others.

I think that it is an important bill. I understand it will go into committee of the whole where the hon. member for Provencher will then give us his thoughts. I do protest again the change which brought it in so quickly this afternoon without sufficient notice. It is an important bill despite the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who sees it as an ancillary part of the Canada Pension Plan. Indeed, it is not central to the working of the plan, and I would not want to see it lightly handled by the House.

I believe members of the House should support the amendment that has been introduced in Bill C-190 which will provide for exemption of certain groups on the basis of their religious belief from participation in the plan.

Members of communal religious groups, such as Old Order Amish and Mennonites, have refused to participate in the Canada Pension Plan because of their religion, which opposes insurance schemes of any kind. They believe that their own religious community, not the government's or any outside insurance plan, should carry the responsibility for the welfare and support of its members.

Religious principles forbid them from making voluntary contributions to a state pension plan. But they co-operate—and this is relevant to the dilemma we are facing today—with the National Revenue Department when it executes garnishees on milk cheques and other income which comes to these people. The government officials intercept their cheques until the \$180 annual payment required by law is made. The garnishees are for non-payment of Canada Pension Plan assessments.

Although they have been forced to pay into the plan, members of the sect have not been credited with money in the fund because they have no social insurance numbers. Thus, on May 15 and 16, 1971, the Canada Pension Plan advisory committee recommended to the then minister of national health and welfare the following motion:

The minister give sympathetic consideration to an amendment to the Canada Pension Plan whereby coverage and consequential provisions would not extend to members of religious denominations which satisfied the minister that such participation is contrary to the religious principles of the denomination.

That motion was carried, and I say to you and the House, Mr. Speaker, that I support the principle behind it. I therefore support the bill which is built on that motion. It is now more than two years since the motion was passed, and it has taken the government that long to act. I am critical of a government that would take so long to deal with the motion, on the one hand, and then because they are in a jumble as to what to bring before the House quickly by way of legislation, just dump this bill in. I say that is not the way to run the government. It is no way to treat an important principle and it is no way to treat members of this House.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal involved in this legislation and yet, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has stated, there is too little involved. If we are to amend this act, then it seems to me it should not be for a certain group of people for whom a special arrangement

Canada Pension Plan

is to be made, but rather for Canadian citizens as a whole to whom certain opportunities are denied by the terms of the legislation.

As a result of a trip to my home for the weekend not long since, I had the misfortune of having to go to the funeral of a young man who had been married for some ten or 12 months. He had been employed in a position where he made contributions to the Canada Pension Plan for less than a year. Since he had contributed only for that short period of time, his widow is not eligible for a pension under the Canada Pension Plan. There are several widows in my constituency who unfortunately have had a comparable experience, one of whom finds herself the mother of three children and with no eligibility under the plan.

I do not believe this was the intention of Parliament when it passed the Canada Pension Plan with certain limitations as to payment. I do not believe that it is the intention of this House that limitations should be imposed upon citizens who make contributions of any kind to the plan. It is not in line with any ordinary, publicly owned pension scheme in which an individual takes out insurance, pays his premiums, and then in some cases is eligible forthwith. Or, in the case of an early, unexpected demise, the benefits are payable because he has paid the premium.

This is an important principle in relation to this act. It is not comprehensive; it does not close gaps which need to be closed for good social reasons. I am rather surprised that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would accede as quietly as he did to such a mild amendment to this act when such consideration is in fact required. The mere inclusion of legal expenses for those who have to go through the courts of this land to obtain their just rights is not adequate. The mere review of an application by a review committee, and the appeal procedures, are not enough either. These are items which, with corrected administrative procedures, probably would not be necessary in the first place; these are items which probably could be considered under the act as it is, exercising wisdom in its administration.

I want to point out one further thing in respect of this act. Do you want to declare it four o'clock, Mr. Speaker? I will not be through before four o'clock.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): It being four o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely notices of motions, public bills and private bills.

[*English*]

Mr. Baldwin: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Before we start the important business relating to private members' hour, in view of the changes we have had I wonder if the government House leader would indicate the business of the House for Monday. I think I have an idea but it might be of some importance to have it on record.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, we propose to resume discussion of the report stage of the Criminal Code bill.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I am interested in when we can plan on the Olympics bill from the standpoint of our