

*Canada Pension Plan*

represents a further departure from the insurance aspects of the program and sets a precedent by which the CPP can be levered into further subsidies, before resolving the future orientation of the plan? That is a very important question which all members of parliament, accepting their responsibilities in this regard, will have to ask themselves. Is it appropriate to introduce a proposal, or proposals—and I would say proposals—before resolving the future orientation of the CPP? It should be noted, as well, that with the exception of certain unique cases and some foster mothers the women who would benefit from this provision under the drop-out proposal will not be retiring for at least 15 years. As the proposal does not require contributions, timing does not seem to be imperative at this point.

So I ask you, Mr. Speaker, in order to bring it to the attention of the parliamentary secretary and the minister, this question: Given the implications of the proposal as related to the drop-out provisions, is it essential to proceed with it at this time, in view of the fact that we do not know what will be the future orientation of the plan, and since many people are raising concerns in regard to the whole funding of the Canada Pension Plan?

I have indicated to the House that at long last there is some attempt to recognize the need for splitting pensions in order that spouses will have an equal share as a result of having made a contribution to the home. I have also pointed out there are some problems in that regard. I have also said that we must consider the role women have played and will be playing in terms of raising their children—men as well. Therefore, we are considering drop-out proposals in order to give them the opportunity to raise their children. At the same time, I let it be known in no uncertain terms that there are a lot of problems with respect to the drop-out proposals. I registered my concern about the whole question of funding of the Canada Pension Plan and do not think I have to add any further words in that regard.

● (1630)

Last, but not least, I dwelt upon the question of investment and what has happened with Canada Pension Plan funds. We are not getting value for our money. It is dangerous to proceed, given the fact that all these matters raise several very important questions. We are waiting now to see that this bill is passed on to committee. I can say, on behalf of my party, that we welcome this step; but at the same time we will have to ask a lot of questions regarding the inequities we see. These are inequities regarding the splitting, the drop-out, the funding, and the investment.

It is most important to point out that we do not have any information as to where this plan is going, yet I know there are expert studies. We are expected to deal with this bill now—the amendments to the Canada Pension Plan. We have no idea as to what future funding means, and we have no idea what we are doing in terms of our grandchildren and payments under this plan. We will allow the bill to go to committee. At that time we will be able to talk to the minister in a reasonable

[Mr. Alexander.]

fashion in order to determine where we are going with the Canada Pension Plan.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), I regard this as a very important piece of legislation. Like him, I am sorry the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) is not able to be here with us throughout this debate. It was explained to me why he is not able to be here this afternoon. I accept that explanation, although I notice that now we do not even have the parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Alexander:** Shame.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** However, if it is not against the rules for me to say it, I do note—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I think there should be a note in *Hansard* to indicate that the reason for that applause is that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has just walked in. Seldom have I had a wish fulfilled so instantaneously. I am aware of the fact that the minister's officials are within the sound of our voices and are taking note of what is being said, so that before the day is out he will have the full debate reported to him.

At the outset I have to say that I shall differ in many respects with my friend from Hamilton West with regard to things he said. I was surprised that his voice was so much the voice of Geoffrey Calvert and Colin Brown of the *Globe and Mail*, rather than the voice of the people of Canada. I believe that they really welcome and applaud the Canada Pension Plan.

I shall leave until later in my remarks any reference to the position that Ontario is taking in refusing to go along with one of the proposed amendments. That means I shall also leave until later my response to the things that the hon. member for Hamilton West has said about the funding of the Canada Pension Plan and the whole question of its orientation and the direction in which it is going.

First, I want to indicate my views with respect to the things that Bill C-49 actually does. I find myself in a position that I have been in a good many times during my years in this House, namely, having to say that this bill goes in the right direction. Therefore, I shall support it. But it does not begin to go far enough. Indeed, I was annoyed when I read in the minister's press release the day the bill was introduced and given first reading words which said that these amendments will recognize the role of spouses working in the home, and then again that these amendments are intended to provide some measure of recognition and financial security for spouses who work in the home.

Sir, if I was annoyed at those mild statements in the press release issued by the minister the day he introduced the bill, my annoyance went up a few notches when I heard his parliamentary secretary say at the conclusion of his speech this afternoon that these amendments represent a major step for-