

Canada Pension Plan

would protect the real value of the pension dollar for Canada's million-odd pensioners.

I cannot help but say that, deliberately or otherwise, Mr. Speaker, this was a complete distortion of the real facts. It sounded noble until some of us received copies of the bill on Tuesday, and other members on Thursday. The bill provides that the Canada pension act shall come into force on January 1, 1966 and that payments under the act will commence on January 1, 1967. The shocking provision so far as present old age pensioners are concerned is that payments based on the cost of living index will not be made until January 1, 1968. They will then be based on experience in the year 1967 only and the increase will not be less than 1 per cent or more than 2 per cent.

Mr. Knowles: It might be zero.

Mr. Monteith: As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre says, it might well be zero. What this means in effect is that old age pensioners cannot expect any increases until January 1, 1968. They might then receive an increase of 75 cents a month if the cost of living index has gone up by 1 per cent in the year 1967. If the cost of living has increased more than 1 per cent old age pensioners can expect an increase of up to \$1.50 per month. If the cost of living does not increase during the year 1967 then, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said, the old age pensioners will not receive an increase. This is a terrible blow to the old age pensioners, Mr. Speaker. These older people have to wait three years and possibly they will then receive an increase of 75 cents a month.

I said earlier that it would be impossible for the greatest legal mind in the world to digest this bill since last Thursday. I admit I have had it since last Tuesday afternoon. I have tried to peruse the bill in the meantime but it has been impossible to digest it. It is an affront to parliament to bring it forward when we have not had an opportunity to study it. However, I would go so far as to say that the officials of the department deserve a great deal of credit. I refer not only to the officials of the Department of National Health and Welfare but also to the officials of finance, justice and maybe national revenue because the bill is so comprehensive.

So far as references and cross-references are concerned, I do not know whether the idea came from the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Benson), but as he well knows the Income Tax Act is the most complicated

piece of legislation on the statute books of Canada today. He made his living out of it, and so did I for a while. But I must say that one would have to sit down for weeks in order to look into the cross-references having to do with this particular legislation. I am not fooling when I say that.

The minister did clear up one matter for me earlier by nodding her head in agreement that the only actuaries who have worked on the actuarial report are government actuaries. Am I correct in that?

Miss LaMarsh: Yes.

Mr. Monteith: And the chief actuary of the Department of Insurance is accepting all responsibility for the figures which will be found in the actuarial report?

Miss LaMarsh: No responsibility?

Mr. Monteith: All responsibility.

Miss LaMarsh: Yes.

Mr. Monteith: That is fine. I accept that. In her remarks the minister referred to the fact that any province, within one month after the act is assented to, may signify its intention to operate its own plan. The minister referred to this in her remarks and I have a question for her. It may be I am at fault here because there were so many details in her statement that I could not quite follow them all and get them all down in writing. However, I believe she did say that a province can opt out at any time after three years if notice is given in writing. Am I correct in that?

Miss LaMarsh: Yes.

Mr. Monteith: I am wondering why the period of three years was chosen. There may be very good reasons. I should like to refer to subclause 2 of clause 4 where I find these words:

Subject to subsection 3, all of the provisions of this act to

(a) employment by Her Majesty in right of Canada or by an agent of Her Majesty in right of Canada in a province providing a comprehensive pension plan.

Perhaps the minister would tell me just how employees of the C.B.C. and the C.N.R. who reside in Quebec will be affected by the plan. I am also interested in clause 6 (1) (i) which reads as follows:

6. (1) Pensionable employment is—

(i) employment by Her Majesty in right of a province or by an agent of Her Majesty in right of a province.