

Canada Pension Plan

decisions are made by those who control private pension plans, as to whether or not to integrate, there should be consultation between employers and employees.

Perhaps the minister has gone as far as she can in saying that this is her view. I hope she agrees with the view expressed by the committee that this is what should be done. In the first place, the government can set an example. Perhaps we could have reassurance on this point, that in so far as the integration of the federal civil service superannuation arrangements with the Canada pension plan is concerned, this is the subject of consultation between the government, as employer, and the staff-side representatives. Another thing the government could do, of course, would be to express its opinion along the lines of the committee's report, to which I have just referred.

There is still another beneficial step which the minister might take, and that is that she might speak to her colleague the Minister of Labour about the matter. She probably knows that there is a provision in the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act which makes it very difficult, in fact almost impossible, for railway employees to put the pension question on the bargaining table when they meet with management. As I say, the limitation is because of a certain section in the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act. Amendments to that act were asked for this morning by those who appeared before the government over in the railway committee room, so I hope the minister will speak with her colleague the Minister of Labour about that matter. Because if the government shares the view which was expressed by the joint committee, that there should be consultation before integration is effected, then let us do everything we can to bring about that consultation. As I say, I am not at this point arguing either for or against integration; I am just asking for consultation and for everything that can possibly be done to bring that consultation about.

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, may I say that I thought the Minister of Finance did make this point quite clear earlier, as have spokesmen for the government repeatedly. This plan which has been devised for the integration of public service superannuation and the Canada pension plan is one which has been worked out very carefully, through consultation with the advisory committee which deals with civil service superannua-

[Mr. Knowles.]

tion and the national joint council, every step of the way. So that consultation has been the one principle which has predominated in the federal government's attitude as an employer toward integration. We still hope that this will be considered to be a sort of guiding light to show the way in which people should operate. It may not be that we have any jurisdiction to go beyond that, except to show them what we hope will be the best kind of example.

Mr. Knowles: I was aware of that. I was hoping the minister would say that, and I thank her for doing so.

The Chairman: Shall the clause carry?

Mr. Monteith: Just before the clause carries, Mr. Chairman, the minister mentioned that to a greater or lesser degree it was going to be left to the employer and the employee to work out a system of integration. If I am wrong about that I certainly stand corrected, but my impression is that she said it would be left to the employer and the employee to work out.

Miss LaMarsh: I am sorry. The context in which I was speaking concerned crown agencies. If I left the impression that somebody else is going to decide, even in the case of crown agencies, without consultation with either employer or employee, then that is quite wrong. It will have to be decided in light of each individual case, whether it be within our jurisdiction or otherwise. I would imagine that within crown agencies—certainly outside them where we have no jurisdiction whatever—this consultation is in conformity with modern labour management practice; and very serious consultation it is, because pension provisions provide such a large part of the fringe benefits in the wage package nowadays.

If I was not clear before, then I do not want the committee to be at all mistaken about it now. The federal government has nothing to do with those people beyond its jurisdiction—that is, the more than 5,000 plans across the country. These will be a matter of negotiation, in most cases between employer and employee. As I did try to explain, in cases where the employer pays for the whole thing he may try to present it to his employees as a package deal; but that is not within the jurisdiction of the federal government, or indeed of hon. members. We may be approached in our capacities as members of parliament by individual employers, especially the smaller ones, who may