

1967, and as the minister said on pages 5 and 6 of his statement:

... these changes will (...) have a profound and long term effect...

... proposals that will have a fundamental and long-term effect on the Canada Pension Plan.

Since I referred to the press release of the recent Federal-Provincial conference of the ministers of Social Affairs, I should also like to make one or two remarks on the last two paragraphs of that press release. I was particularly happy that the ministers should have expressed their concern for the equality of contributions and benefits between persons of both sexes and especially with regard to spouses who did not contribute and who, therefore, do not now qualify for benefits.

When we touch upon this matter, we evidently do not speak about anonymous persons, that are merely considered as statistics. In fact we think in real terms, of people we come into contact every day and especially about our mother, wife, sisters and fellow workers. It sometimes happens that some bureaucrats find it difficult not to think in abstract terms about human facts. Politicians who have become fully aware of those realities of our daily life in view of the fact that they receive many telephone calls, letters, and personal representations, understand better the need to further improve the present plan.

My wife, Mr. Speaker, like all good mothers, runs a house, a home, a training school, most of the time without the help of the father who is busy discharging his legislative, parliamentary and electoral responsibilities. Many men are not only chauvinist but they are prejudiced against the woman who stays at home. Women's lib sometimes goes too far, even in the opinion of many women, and I remember some remarks made recently by the hon. Thérèse Casgrain. But on the other hand, this so-called Women's Lib has the advantage of making us aware of the social status of women, and in that respect, it is worthwhile.

The inquiry on the status of women in Canada found out a great many facts on the inferior situation of women as compared to men, on the labour force, their working conditions as social partners of men; above all it was demonstrated that we still have laws openly discriminating against them in addition to the fact that they are the constant object of the lowest prejudices mainly on the part of men.

This government has obviously undertaken to correct abuses, to eliminate discrimination and very substantial progress has already been observed, especially where matters coming under federal jurisdiction are concerned. I will not recite all those measures today, Mr. Speaker, because I wish to concentrate my remarks on the subject before us and, besides, I already had the opportunity to deal with that question during the election campaign last year and I believe that a great majority of my constituents appreciated the government's intention in that regard.

Surely I am in favour of a serious study designed to bring about major changes in the Canada Pension Plan so that our wives and mothers may become eligible to the same extent as the main family support, where contributions and benefits are concerned. I may also add at this

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point that during its recent political convention, the Liberal Party readily recognized such a need and asked that women, housewives, be admitted to the Canada Pension Plan on a contributory basis. But the law says that two thirds of the provinces have to be in agreement. It will be interesting to see how the provinces will respond to that suggestion.

I suggest that the Ministers of Social Affairs should tackle that problem which in my opinion amounts to social inequity, and that they should do so as soon as possible. I am happy to see that such is the intention of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and I am happy about it.

To sum up my remarks, and that is not the least of my concerns, Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with what the minister in his official statement has described as the need to enact certain provisions concerning advanced retirement under both plans. I was quoting from the French text. The English text is still clearer and I quote:

The suggestion that early retirement provisions should be built into the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans.

If I translate this technical language in brayon, the language spoken in the Republic of Madawaska that I have the honour to represent in this House, this simply means, for all practical purposes, lowering the eligibility age for retirement benefits down to 60. This is the suggestion that is often put forward by an increasing number of my constituents. I have dealt with it recently in a speech on family allowances and I also referred to it in this House on October 19, 1971, I think.

Of course, some people will say that a few arguments support this matter, which I am most concerned about as others work against such a proposal. But I suggest that experience is the important factor in this regard. All I ask is that this matter be carefully considered and that we be given once and for all the reasons, if any, that prevent us from including these advantages in the Canada Pension Plan or, as the case may be, from taking immediate steps to amend the Canada Pension Plan in order to satisfy the public's request.

Workmen of my region who work in the forest, who perform farming or manufacturing chores, who work for railways during very hot summers and very cold winters, in pulp and paper plants, in sawmills and who often have been working since they were 20 years old and sometimes less, are physically worn-out, tired out unable most of the time to do a job that becomes increasingly difficult for them when they reach the age of 55 or 60.

I feel that these people who have worked so hard for so long to build up a country would deserve that more consideration be given to their wish for early retirement without being obliged to undergo a series of exams that I consider as red tape.

I have found most advisable the minister's intention to eliminate for the contributors to the Canada Pension Plan aged from 65 to 69 the obligation of undergoing this series of examinations.

I am therefore glad that the government of Canada is studying this proposal with the provinces and I am looking forward to the findings of this study. But I think it would be a good thing for a parliamentary committee to ponder over this proposal some day, either before the