

determined by a distant group of officials in the capital, but by a community board, people in the community, who would determine the priorities, needs and, therefore, the jobs that would have to be created as a substantial component of this national scheme.

The salaries to be paid under this approach would be arrived at in consultation with the people whose premiums paid for the creation of the jobs, namely working Canadians. There is nothing wrong with consulting Canadians on this matter. Actually, it would be highly desirable. It would indicate the degree of support for this approach. The government would learn the value Canadians put on those who were willing to take on jobs in the public sector and perform something meaningful to society, not something motivated by profit.

● (1530)

Designing this system would bring us closer to the concept of full employment. Employment in the profit sector, when added to those employed in the public sector embraces the largest percentage of people who are working today. This combination of the two would come pretty close to the ideal that is described in reports of the Economic Council of Canada. A system of this kind would provide opportunity for two groups of people—those who prefer meaningful work and less pay, and those who find themselves temporarily dislocated as a result of fluctuations in the private sector and are willing to accept community or environment-oriented jobs that are offered by the local commissions that would come into existence.

I appreciate the reluctance of anybody to consider new schemes and approaches that are different from ones that have been tested so far. However, it seems to me that it would be a pity if we were to embark on a series of measures to patch up and perhaps make tighter an existing system, one that has proven its service but which is rapidly becoming outdated, rather than look at alternative approaches—there may be others more desirable and valuable than the one I have endeavoured to outline this afternoon—that need these new values that are strongly developing in Canadian society. These approaches would also make profitable use of the experience we have accumulated over the years as well as the very positive and constructive experience that has been made available throughout the country through the concept of LIP.

There are other aspects in which the people of my riding are interested. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Davenport is a downtown riding of an urban nature and is fairly representative of many other ridings in urban Canada today. Very often in public discussions the question of pensions has come up, particularly the Canada Pension Plan. Meetings that have taken place between the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) and his provincial colleagues have been very closely followed. At public meetings people have expressed their very keen interest in seeing changes made to the Canada Pension Plan to permit people who are not employed to contribute the full amount of the premium that is presently paid by employer and employee. These people include those who are at home and others who are not in the labour force. This means that women in particular would eventually be able to look forward to some kind of retirement pension when the time comes. This is not a novel proposal; it has been accepted in

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other countries of the world as part of their social security systems.

Another possible amendment to the Canada Pension Plan which has been put forward in very strong terms is that people who, for some reason or other, have suffered a serious injury but have not reached the required five-year period for contributions, should qualify for a disability pension. This would include people who suffer from progressive diseases, people who have sustained a serious car accident, and others who are handicapped. The proposal is that this five-year contribution requirement be replaced by something that is more flexible. For example, such persons could receive a pension that is in proportion to their number of years of contribution, rather than continuing the present situation where they do not qualify for a pension even if they have contributed for four years and 11 months. I appreciate the difficulties faced by the minister in implementing this approach, but nevertheless it is an argument that makes sense and which, sooner or later, deserves the attention of the minister. It is at times sad to listen to pathetic people who find themselves cut off from even a very modest disability pension simply because they have not contributed for the magic period of five years.

In the area in which I live another very important issue is developing that may have national proportions, at least in industrial centres. I refer to lead pollution. It seems that no one really knows when lead pollution reaches the danger level to health. It seems to me that there is real scope here for the federal government to come to the aid of the provincial governments and municipalities by determining what limit should be placed on lead pollution before it becomes a danger to health. There was a very interesting program on the CBC recently which brought this whole question to the surface. All hon. members are probably aware of the legal consequences; it is a matter that is very serious and I welcome this opportunity of bringing it to the attention of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I regret that the time of the hon. member has expired.

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, like those throughout the rest of Canada, the people who live in my constituency of Leeds wonder why the government has so completely failed to deal with the problem of inflation. Undoubtedly, the galloping cost of living is by far the greatest single problem facing this country today. But the government has literally ignored the situation for months and for years in the apparent hope that it will simply go away.

Any belated death bed repentances that the government dangles under our noses now can scarcely be taken very seriously. We have heard all about magic contingency plans in the past. The Houdinis opposite have often talked about these forthcoming productions to solve our problems, but they have either turned out to be mirages or else they were nothing more than a few temporary pay-offs to the New Democratic Party in the greatest public political prostitution performance in the history of Canada.

In a recent television interview the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made it clear that he expects living costs to continue the same sharp rise this year as last year. Fur-