

Canada Pension Plan

these are questions that have been raised by a great many people in the country. The problem of integration is one of them. Premier Robarts, in this television program, felt that this was one of the questions many people had written to him about, and all I was going to do was read into the record what Premier Robarts and Mr. Coward, his pension adviser, said in this regard:

Premier Robarts: Well then the second question that I know is of great interest to many, many people is simply this: What happens to my pension plan to which I have been contributing for years when the Canada pension plan comes into operation? What happens to the money that I have paid into a company pension plan?

This was one of the questions raised by my hon. friend.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Precisely.

Mr. Benson: The answer from Mr. Coward was this:

The first thing to make clear is that the money will not be confiscated or taken over by the government in any way. Your pension plan will remain and the money that's already been paid into the trust fund, or to the insurance company or the government annuities branch or wherever it may be, will remain to provide the benefits that you have earned for your service up to the date that the Canada pension plan comes in. It is true of course that some pension plans will want to make changes applicable to the future benefits in order to dovetail with the Canada pension plan, but you can be assured that the benefits that already stand to your credit will not be forfeited or taken away.

Premier Robarts then asked the following question:

Well I think that it follows from this answer then, and you may give me your opinion or comments on this, that it would be wise for anyone who presently is in a pension plan to maintain that plan, because it really will be imposed on top of the basic plan which is the Canada pension plan.

Mr. Coward: Oh yes, it would be very imprudent to pull out of a pension plan just because we will have a new government plan. Most people will want more than the government plans will provide. The government plan provides a basic floor and pensions in addition through pension plans and through private saving will be very necessary; and I would strongly recommend that you should consider very carefully before you consider discontinuing a plan or pulling out your money.

There has been a good deal said in the House of Commons on the problem of integration of the Canada pension plan with other pension plans, over a long period of time. I can remember back as far as November 4, when the resolution was introduced into the house and I made comments in this regard. It is not within the legislative power of the federal government to tell individual firms in this country how they and their employees

will work in integrating their pension plans with the Canada pension plan. It may be that where no pension plan exists, or where the pension benefits are small, the Canada pension plan will be simply decked on top of the existing benefits in the pension plans that exist.

Mr. Monteith: Is this term similar to "dialogue"? Is it a new government term?

Mr. Benson: In cases to which my hon. friend referred in regard to provincial governments and whether they will come into the Canada pension plan and their employees will be covered by this plan, this has to be decided by the provincial governments before the plan is proceeded with. There are measures in the bill to provide for this. Whether the provinces decide that provincial employees will come into the plan, whether there will be a decking of the provincial plan, or whether part of the provincial employer-employee contributions will be put into this plan is a matter for the provincial governments to decide.

Similarly the provincial governments will aid in deciding this question with regard to provincially employed school teachers and various other people who are in these categories throughout the country. The federal government just has not the power to tell people how they are going to integrate with the Canada pension plan. What we are trying to do here is this: The Canada pension plan is aiming at providing a basic pension plan which is applicable to as many people in the labour force in Canada as is possible.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I think I should interject at this point to remind the committee that we are discussing clause 91 dealing with regulations. While there may be some part of the discussion on regulations themselves, any question as to what these regulations are is completely out of order since the regulations themselves cannot be drawn until the bill is passed. I would therefore request hon. members to confine themselves very closely to the material contained in clause 91.

Mr. Skoreyko: Mr. Chairman, you have by your ruling in fact prohibited us from enlarging on some of the statements which the Minister of National Revenue has just made. It is true that if we stick very closely to the spirit of clause 91, then we are not allowed to elaborate on what the minister has said.

Mr. Benson: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I might just interject here and