

Canada Pension Plan

level established in the bill. They can increase by 1, 2 or even 3 per cent, over a four- or five-year period. Then, the farmer will have a double burden to carry, because he does not have the protection enjoyed by other social classes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it would only be fair and equitable if the farmer, like the worker, paid a contribution of 1.8 per cent of his income in order to be on an equal footing with the latter.

I hope, when the legislation has been referred to the committee, that the representatives of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, of the catholic farmers' union and of the co-operatives will come and express the views of the farmers, in order that the latter be treated fairly and on the same footing as the other classes of citizens as far as contributions are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I also wonder if it would not be possible to amend section 66, in order that the pension be paid when one becomes 60 years old. The hon. members know very well the problem which arises presently for the workers aged 45 years and over. Besides, it is practically impossible for those who have already reached the age of 60 to obtain employment.

Therefore, I think the pension age should be reduced to 60 years, in order to give social security to this class of citizens, who, at the present time, face a serious problem when they want to find employment.

Such are, Mr. Speaker, the remarks I wanted to make, and I believe it would be very important that the farmer be treated on the same footing as the worker and that the contribution he will have to pay be the same as the one paid by the worker, in brief, that the extra assessment of 1.8 per cent which the farmer has to pay be paid altogether by the Canadian taxpayers at large.

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. Pigeon: Yes.

Mr. Pepin: The hon. member mentioned that certain members were opposed to Quebec having its own pension plan. Could he identify these members?

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to indulge in personalities in this house. Some members were opposed to this, and I said so quite frankly; whether they are from the government or the opposition, it does not matter. I said what I thought, according to my conscience and, as I said, the provinces

[Mr. Pigeon.]

have priority in the field of social security. In fact, the provinces have no lesson to receive from the federal government and from members of the house whoever they are, from whatever side of the house they are.

[Text]

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian public have waited many years for a change in the system of social security welfare. In the area I come from the adoption of a portable pension plan operated by the government will provide security for the elderly, and many employees who under no circumstances would have been able to receive this type of benefit. I refer mainly to people such as miners, woodworkers and in many cases farmers.

In the area I represent we have been suffering from the disadvantage that persons working on a particular contract are not eligible for a pension because the operation does not continue for the minimum required length of time to permit the establishment of a pension plan. Second, governments over the years have been plagued with regulations made by the federal Department of Finance, which were set up to provide for vesting, so as to allow the carrying forward of employers' contributions into a pension plan for retiring employees. The fact that this government has decided to implement a social security system not unlike those of many other countries is, I think, a very good thing.

I hope that what was said by the hon. member for Essex South (Mr. Whelan), and the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Pennell), will be taken into consideration by those who read about the pension plan in the records of parliament. The hon. member speaking for the Minister of Finance did add considerable detail, and further confused my understanding of the supplementary benefits of this plan. However, upon further study of what he said I am quite sure it will prove to clarify some of the points that previously were confusing.

On the other hand, the hon. member for Essex South, who probably took some direction from the political pundits of his party, wrote a purely political pension speech. That speech should be examined by the members of this house, because it is probably the type of election propaganda we will hear during the forthcoming election campaign, whenever that may take place.

Mr. Whelan: Thank you for the compliment.