

Interim Supply

legal in any province which desired to have such lotteries. The federal delegation indicated that it had no intention of introducing national lotteries itself but was anxious to hear the views of the provinces with regard to this matter. While one province, the province of Quebec, was strongly in favour of this amendment to the Criminal Code, there were others who were opposed to the amendment, because while they themselves would not have to institute lotteries under such an amendment—there would be no obligation on their part to support any such action—they nevertheless in one or two cases felt some objection should be taken to the recognition of lotteries in this way, and in other cases felt that if there was a provincial lottery in one province where it was legal, there would be great difficulties in enforcing it in an adjacent province where it was illegal. Therefore the federal government, as the communique said, merely took note of the views expressed by the provinces and will have to give the matter consideration.

Then we had a quite complete discussion, or as complete as possible in the short time available, of the Canada pension plan. As a result of that discussion, we indicated that we would supply the provinces in writing with certain detailed information regarding the plan. I had a statement to make on this matter before the conference, and perhaps I can tell the committee that, in introducing the discussion, I listed headings under which I thought discussion might take place, and those headings included the main features of the federal pension proposal. The main discussion ranged around these features: First of all, coverage; to whom the plan would apply. Second, earnings limits; the amounts of income on which pensions were to be paid and contributions collected. Third, benefit levels; the size of pensions and the conditions under which they would be available. Fourth, pensionable earnings; a definition of what a man has been earning as the basis for calculating his pension. Fifth, the maturity period; the number of years over which pensions scales would rise to the full level of the plan. There was quite a vigorous discussion of that and some difference of opinion on it. Sixth, funding; the scale of contributions to be levied in relation to the size of reserves to be provided and the contribution which would thereby be made to savings during the years before the plan reached full maturity. Then next, the relation of the public plan to private plans and the question of such private plans contracting out.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the Prime Minister allow a question at this stage? What were the [Mr. Pearson.]

views expressed by the federal government in regard to private plans? What is the scheme that the federal government has in mind which will permit the continuance of private plans; or, if continuance is not permitted, the scheme that would give credit to the various participants in present pension plans? What is the general outline in that regard? We have never had that.

Mr. Pearson: It would not be easy for me to go into detail at this time, of course, but I appreciate the importance of the subject and the interest of the committee in it. We pointed out to the conference that while we on the federal side had no objection to private plans contracting out—that is, no objection in principle—there were very great administrative difficulties. Those difficulties had been shown by experience in some countries to be almost insurmountable in the case of certain types of national plans.

Therefore we thought it would be better to proceed—we put this to the provinces for their consideration, and this is one of the matters on which we are writing further and giving them more detail—by introducing the kind of national plan to which private plans could be adapted. The provinces wanted to know about this principle of adaption and we all agreed that whether adaptation of that kind could be possible would depend on the nature of the public plan and how it could be assimilated with private plans, or vice versa. We hope, with the information which we will be giving to the provinces and giving to the house, to remove some of the fears expressed by some of the provinces that this would be the greatest stumbling block in the way of a satisfactory national pension plan.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the Prime Minister allow a further question. He is generalizing at the moment, but could he say whether or not the federal government has a plan which will assure that those who today have private pension plans will not find themselves in a position where the contributions they have made and the credit to which they are entitled will not be taken into consideration by any federal plan?

Mr. Pearson: I can give my right hon. friend an assurance that in the plan that we will eventually put forward, after these exchanges of views which I have been talking about, the interests of those who are now contributing to private plans will be protected and that they will not lose by the Canada pension plan. I do not think I can go any further than that at the moment.

Mr. Diefenbaker: But the plan is ready?

Mr. Pearson: The plan has been ready, Mr. Chairman, but as a result of consultations