

That the said committee have power to call for persons, papers and records and to examine witnesses, to report from time to time and to print such papers and evidence from day to day as may be ordered by the committee and to sit during sittings and adjournments of the Senate; and

That a message be sent to the House of Commons to inform that House accordingly.

He said: Honourable senators, a few days ago there was an all-party agreement in the House of Commons to the effect that when the item on the Order Paper of that house dealing with the Canada Pension Plan was reached the debate would be limited to three days, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, during ordinary sittings. This means that by agreement of all parties in the House of Commons a motion for the approval of this measure in principle and its reference to a committee will be put to that house before the time of adjournment this evening.

As honourable senators know, for some time it has been contemplated that this bill, which is voluminous and intricate, should receive the attention of a special committee, and it is felt by the Government that that committee should be a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons. It will consist of 36 members, of which this house is to appoint 12. The House of Commons has already agreed to the setting up of this committee although it has not as yet named its members. In order that a vehicle be available to which that house may refer the bill this afternoon, it is necessary that the Senate consider this motion today.

All honourable senators will agree, I think, that it is highly desirable not to duplicate the studies in committee that must be made of this bill. The appointment of a joint committee will make for a great saving of parliamentary time. The joint committee will also provide honourable senators with an opportunity to consider the bill, to hear the explanations that will be given of it, and to hear the representations that will be made to the committee by outside bodies.

It is highly appropriate, therefore, that we nominate 12 of our members to sit upon that joint committee. Indeed, this procedure has been followed on other occasions by joint agreement of the two Houses of Parliament. The resolution that we pass must also provide that if this joint committee sits when the Senate is not in session, or indeed when the Senate is in session, its members who represent this house should be entitled to be there as of right.

That is an explanation of the general principle involved in this motion. All hon-

ourable senators are familiar with this kind of measure, as such measures have come before us on many occasions.

Honourable senators, may I take this opportunity to say I am sorry that the notice recalling the Senate could not have been sent sooner. This could not be done because its dispatch depended upon the arrangement made by all parties in the other house; it went out, after consultation with our honourable Speaker, as quickly as it possibly could after I received the firm information.

In the event that some honourable senators might have difficulty in getting seats on aircraft, I should like to inform the house that I telephoned the President of Air Canada and asked him particularly to facilitate any applications by honourable senators to return to Ottawa for today. I do not know if anyone had difficulty getting reservations, but the president promised to do what he could. It is most gratifying to all of us to see so many senators here.

An Hon. Senator: What about the fog?

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): The fog I could not disperse, and snow in the Maritimes I could not deal with.

Hon. M. Wallace McCutcheon: Honourable senators, I am sure that all honourable senators will welcome the setting up of this joint committee, the purpose of which has been described by the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It is an important committee.

Some honourable senators here will recall a similar joint committee which was set up in, I believe, 1951 to consider the whole question of old age pensions in so far as the federal Government is concerned. Its deliberations extended over some months and its report was the foundation on which was based the present Old Age Security legislation, viz. the flat rate categorical old age pension. In passing, it is interesting to note that two of the witnesses who appeared before that committee are now sitting on the treasury benches in another place.

It is 17 months since there was first introduced into another place a resolution authorizing the consideration of an act to establish a comprehensive program of old age pensions. There have been two other resolutions since that time, two other bills, and today we have before us Bill C-136, which was distributed only on Thursday of last week.

We have the minister's speech, which she has distributed to honourable senators, of some 26 pages. We have press reports indicating that several other ministers have spoken at length on this matter. We also have