

become masters of their own pension house. I hope I can depend on hon. members of this House to support the bill standing in my name, Bill C-5.

• (1720)

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to on this bill, one is tempted to make many observations pertaining to CNR and CPR railroad pensions.

Mr. Benjamin: Go ahead.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): However, I want to say a few words about certain questions to which Bill C-5 makes reference and explain how I feel. I wish to make it known that I have attended three meetings of railroad pensioners' meetings which were held in Winnipeg this year. I want to go on record as saying that I agree wholeheartedly with the railroad pensioners' requests. They say that, the CNR being a Crown corporation, their pension should be on a basis of parity with those available to employees of Air Canada, which is also a Crown corporation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, these people are not asking for air passes; they are asking only for equally good pensions. They are also requesting that the voluntary retirement age be set at 60. I would agree with Mr. Picket, of Edmonton, the chairman of the association, that this would create additional jobs in this country. I, personally, have made representations to the national caucus of the Liberal party. I know, also, that the hon. member for Lévis (Mr. Guay) and the hon. member for London East (Mr. Turner) have made representations, along with mine, to the minister. I wish it to be known that our representations have certainly been taken into consideration and that the minister is aware of what the railroad pensioners would like to see. I hope that in the near future active consideration will be given to that end.

Mr. Alexander: You sound like a minister, Joe. I am flattering you.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, any amendments to the Pension Benefits Standards Act require the most careful consideration by reason of the relationship between this legislation and similar legislation in a number of the provinces, particularly in Ontario and Quebec. The first legislation in this field was passed by Ontario following an extensive study by a special committee of the legislature. Similar legislation was adopted in Quebec and the federal legislation was designed to follow as closely as possible the legislation adopted by the provinces. Uniformity of legislation in this field is most important in order that employers and their employees who are subject to the federal legislation, will not be at an advantage or disadvantage as compared with employers and employees who are subject to the provincial legislation. As a consequence, any amendments in the federal legislation or the provincial legislation are usually discussed in considerable detail among the various jurisdictions, to ensure so far as possible that the legislation will remain uniform.

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Pension Benefits Standards Act

It is of interest in this connection to note that Ontario has recently published a Green Paper outlining possible amendments to the Ontario legislation having to do with a change in the vesting requirements. The present act requires that all benefits accruing in respect of service after the introduction of the legislation be fully invested in employees after they reach the age of 45 and have achieved ten years of service. Consideration is also being given to a change in this requirement, to make vesting effective at the age of 40 after five years of service. The paper published by Ontario was for the purpose of raising this possibility for discussion, and many representations have been made. The information thus gathered will be of much interest to other jurisdictions having similar legislation or considerations to meet.

The question of information to be provided to employees is dealt with in all of this legislation on a uniform basis. The present requirement is spelled out in section 11, particularly in paragraph (c) of that section.

Mr. Rose: I beg to differ.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): In accordance with this paragraph, a pension plan is required, if it is to be eligible for registration, to provide for an explanation to be given to each member of the plan of the terms and conditions of the plan and any amendments thereto that are applicable to him. This is quite clear, Mr. Speaker. He is also required to have an explanation of his rights and duties with respect to the benefits available to him under the plan. The section also includes the authority to adopt regulations with respect to the provision of other information for the employee.

Mr. Rose: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member for St. Boniface to suggest to the House where in section 11, paragraph (c), there is reference to financial matters affecting the plan?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I do not think that is a point of order. It is a question for debate.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would stay in the House and listen to what I am saying. He would understand me better. I will repeat those remarks having to do with information to be provided to employees. As I said near the beginning of my remarks, the question of information to be provided to employees is dealt with in all the legislation on a uniform basis and the present requirement is spelled out in section 11, particularly in paragraph (c) of that section. I will repeat also what I said after that. In accordance with this paragraph, a pension plan is required, if it is to be eligible for registration, to provide for an explanation to be given to each member of the plan of the terms and conditions of the plan and any amendments thereto that are applicable to him. He is also required to have an explanation of his rights and duties with respect to benefits available to him under the plan. The section also includes authority to adopt regulations with regard to the provision of other information for the employee.

It is certainly reasonable and desirable that each employee should have full information concerning the