

Canada Pension Plan

employees of foreign governments in Canada—she may correct me if I am wrong about this—may be covered if the employer agrees to pay their contributions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Monteith: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) applauds.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but the hon. member did not realize that we were applauding the appearance in the house of the Cr ditiste party. It has just arrived.

Mr. Monteith: At last. I am certainly very pleased to join in the welcome.

Mr. Churchill: I don't.

Mr. Gr goire: Mr. Speaker, to answer this welcome from the hon. member I would like to say that the Cr ditiste members were attending about 40 public meetings during the week end, were continuing to organize throughout all the provinces, and were saying—

Mr. Monteith: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member has any right to be on his feet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Monteith) has the floor.

Mr. Monteith: What they were doing had nothing to do with pensions, unless they are looking for one in some other sphere.

I would, in all seriousness, like to ask the minister another question. I will take an example. If a Canadian citizen were a chauffeur or worked at a foreign embassy in Canada, and the foreign embassy did not choose to enter into an agreement, that person could not be covered, could he? Am I right in my thinking in this regard? The minister nods, indicating "yes". I think this is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, but I will not argue the point at the moment.

This will undoubtedly come up during the course of the study by the joint committee. The minister's statement contained reference to baby sitters, snow shovellers, individuals who make curtains, and individuals in other categories. I do not intend to go into this subject, because various categories of eligible workers will undoubtedly be studied by that committee.

One certainly could not hope to digest all of the detail contained in the minister's opening remarks in the time available, but I should like to refer to several specific points. She made two assumptions about rates, but she would not accept the responsibility for

either. These were actuarial assumptions. Sooner or later the minister is going to have to accept some responsibility in this regard. She pointed out that the thinking of one group was such and such, while the thinking of another group was different, and she did not appear to know exactly where she herself stood. In my humble estimation she is going to have to accept responsibility in this regard and make some declaration.

I was amazed by her suggestion concerning the thinking of some people that 5 per cent of our labour force being unemployed is not a bad situation, whereas the thinking of another group was that 4 per cent of the labour force being unemployed was not too bad. I am wondering what the minister herself thinks in this regard. In this connection I recall the considerable amount of conjecture expressed by the Minister of Finance in his book.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the minister has manifested a certain amount of what I should call waffling. She has stated that some economists have said that interest rates will go up, whereas others feel interest rates will go down. It certainly appears to me that she was waffling, in that she did not declare her position or thinking in this regard.

One other comment by the minister in her opening remarks I found intriguing. I hope she will correct me if I am wrong, but I thought she was referring to the members of this house. She did say that the lifetime earnings of members of parliament were going to be averaged out. I should like at this time to ask the minister how she thinks this averaging out process is going to be worked out. I hope she will answer that question in due course. Is the Department of National Health and Welfare going to have access to the records of the Department of National Revenue? These records have been considered somewhat sacrosanct in the past, and I do not think departments should collaborate for the purpose of exchanging this kind of information. I am not complaining seriously at the moment in this regard, but I should like the minister to tell us whether these lifetime earnings are to be averaged out on the basis of that kind of exchange of information.

The minister made one other remark which struck me as facetious. Surely she was not being serious when she suggested that many of us could hardly wait until we reached the age of 65 to retire. I look forward with happiness to every year before I reach age 65, as I am not in a hurry to attain that precarious age. Perhaps one could sense a slight