

*Provision for Portable Pensions*

in the past as though it were money in the bank. Other employees realize that because many private pension plans have had tricks played with them—some, indeed, have not been able to pay the pensions they were supposed to pay—what this legislation does is to protect the rights of employees in their own pension plans. That makes it good legislation. Indeed, one of the reasons we have pressed for this legislation and one of the reasons we need it is precisely because the history of pension plans in this country demonstrates the necessity for protection of this kind for the workers.

In this same area of confusion there will be some uncertainty in the minds of workers as to what this legislation does. Many workers will think that once this legislation is in effect they will all have pension plans and that such plans will be protected by law. This, of course, is not the case. All this bill does is to ensure that if an employer who comes under the jurisdiction I have mentioned has established a pension plan, or if hereafter he brings one into being, it must meet the standards set up under this legislation.

It is my hope that in the course of time we may go further and get Canada pension legislation which will make it mandatory that every worker in this country who works for an employer, however that may be described, must have the benefit of a pension plan. As I say, the government seems to have a public relations service available to it for some of its legislation. I hope it will make use of this service in the case of the present legislation and see that our people understand what it provides and to whom it applies.

I have pointed out that this legislation provides protection for the rights of workers in pension plans. I think reference should be made in particular to the dissatisfaction which has been felt by employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway over the way in which their pension plans have been handled through the years. This is a long story and I will not go into any great detail at this time. But I well remember the results of the 1919 strike in Winnipeg. Employees who had been working for the C.P.R. up to that time but who were involved in the general strike in Winnipeg lost all the pension rights they had acquired with the company prior to that time.

For many years retired C.P.R. employees suffered because there was no protection for them at that time. Of course, the C.P.R. would point out that the plan then in effect

was a different plan, that it was a non-contributory plan and was not the same as the plan which came into effect in 1937. But even since the bringing into being by the C.P.R. of a contributory pension plan there have been many occasions for dissatisfaction on the part of the employees. Conditions of the plan have been changed from time to time, presumably by a committee, but the men have the feeling the changes have been made by the C.P.R. itself. More recently, after the Canada Pension Plan came into being the C.P.R. employees seem to have had considerable difficulty obtaining adjustments in the relationship between the C.P.R. pension plan and the Canada Pension Plan and putting the two on a basis which would meet the desires and needs of the employees themselves.

Again, there is considerable concern on the part of C.P.R. employees as to what is done with the moneys in the company's pension fund. Canadian Pacific is a company with many holdings including Canadian Pacific Investments and it is generally understood that some of the money in that pension fund is at the disposal of Canadian Pacific Investments regardless of whether or not the employees agree to this use being made of their money.

Recently, as a result of the changes brought about by the introduction of the Canada Pension Plan, the C.P.R. has changed its mind two or three times as to whether its employees must or need not be members of the company's plan. This has created a great deal of uncertainty and the employees have complained about this kind of thing. They seem to have no recourse, however, beyond the complaints they make to the company itself. The way in which the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act is set up makes it difficult, if not impossible, to get the pension arrangements of the C.P.R. made the subject of collective bargaining.

I could go into more detail but I do not intend to do so. I cite these things merely to indicate that the time has come when in the interests of the employees the state should step in and lay down standards for the pension plans of private employers so that the rights of employees may be protected. As I understand it, that is the principle behind this legislation.

• (2:30 p.m.)

For a number of years there was a move or at least an attempt to do something in this direction under the aegis of the income tax

[Mr. Knowles.]