

The CHAIRMAN (*Mr. Cameron*): It that agreed?

Agreed.

Gentlemen, that concludes the routine business. We are to have the opportunity of hearing Miss Judy LaMarsh, the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I do not suppose it is necessary for me to introduce her; that would be superfluous in a committee of this nature with a person so widely known as the Minister of National Health and Welfare. She has had a very distinguished career at the bar, and she has had a very distinguished career as a parliamentarian.

I have very much pleasure in asking Miss LaMarsh to address the committee.

Hon. JUDY V. LAMARSH (*Minister, Department of National Health and Welfare*): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen. I have a prepared statement which I should like to deal with first. I imagine that afterwards there may be some questions which you will wish to put to me.

In the first instance I would like to say that of course I cannot imagine anyone who would appear before you either on behalf of the government or otherwise who would object to any matters of policy being asked at any time the committee considered it appropriate. Civil servants, of course, are in a much different situation, and I would assume that all members of the committee can rely on their discretion in refusing to answer any questions of policy in any event. I am sure many of those who are interested to prepare briefs and appear before the committee will be as prepared and indeed as eager to discuss matters of policy as myself or other representatives of the government.

This is, Mr. Chairman, a rare opportunity to meet this particular committee. I have been waiting for about 18 months to meet a committee on the Canada pension plan. I understand that after I have spoken to you, and after you have heard from Dr. Willard, the deputy minister of welfare, you will begin—as I have heard mentioned in the steering committee's report—a clause by clause examination of the Canada pension plan bill. During that review my officials and those of other departments will be available to explain to you the many complex details of this plan.

In my remarks today I intend to review some of the main features of the plan and to answer some of the questions that were raised by hon. members during second reading of the bill in the House of Commons. I do this as much to give them answers as to have a general review for members of the Senate who may not have had the opportunity to read some of the early material and some of the government speeches in the house.

I would like first to discuss coverage.

In my remarks in the house on the second reading of the bill, I pointed out that our objective was to have as comprehensive coverage as possible. Employees earning over \$600 a year, and self-employed persons earning over \$800 a year, will be required to contribute to the plan. I mentioned that only a few groups would be excluded from coverage, and these are excluded for constitutional or administrative reasons. Provincial and foreign governments, as employers, are beyond our jurisdiction. While we cannot require an employer contribution from them, we hope that satisfactory agreements can be worked out with these governments to bring their employees under the Plan.

Since there are special provisions for the retirement of members of the armed forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at a relatively early age, they have not been included under this plan; they can join it when they take up other employment after retiring from service. On the other hand, public servants do not retire until 60 or 65, so we saw no reason to exclude them from