

Canada Pension Plan

from clause 4. There is a link between the contradictions noticed this last week about a particular status for Quebec and this morning's statements which made the front page of the newspaper *Le Soleil* on Thursday, March 11, 1965.

According to Mr. Jean Lesage, Quebec will be able to obtain a special status.

When you read that part of the report where Mr. Lesage deals with the delegation of powers, the opting out of joint plans, you see that the objective is to make a revised, repatriated and most flexible constitution.

As far as I am concerned, I do not think that the flexibility of a constitution is a way to guarantee to the province of Quebec the rights given by the 1867 constitution. The reason for the existence of a constitution is precisely the protection of the rights of minorities.

So, a flexible constitution, according to the promoters of co-operative federalism, who never gave an exact definition of it—and the definition given by the hon. member for St. Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) would make the question even more seriously what would happen if, today, we definitively passed that Bill No. C-136—calls for the exercise of a right of veto and the bargaining power which is to serve as a counterbalance in the preparation of a new constitution from now until 1967.

Such a flexible constitution gives me some concern. I think that the province of Quebec and the people of that province should be more conscious of the implications of clause 4 of Bill No. C-136 in the field of taxes.

That is why, in the light of the serious arguments brought forward by the previous speaker, considering the studies now under way in a committee of the Senate on aging and on fiscality—we even have in Quebec a commission which, for the last two years, has been carrying out a most comprehensive investigation on fiscality in that province and in Canada—I think it would be proper, as he said, not to tie up with that clause of Bill C-136 the part of social security which comes under amendments already made to the constitution.

I would very much like to get an answer that would put an end to that fear which is undoubtedly shared by all those who want to see better understanding between all Canadians from Quebec as well as the other provinces; I would very much like to get from the minister some explanations about the possible effects of clause 4 and the amendment under consideration not only on taxation but

on the scope of the rights that the application of that clause will allow.

[Text]

Mr. Nugent: Mr. Chairman, the resolution before us today moves some way, as others have said in this house, toward satisfying the feeling of a great many Canadians that what should be concentrated upon is the old age security pension. I cannot say that I have had an opportunity to talk to too many of my constituents; the necessity of being, shall I say, too long in this house over the last year has unfortunately kept many of us out of touch with people in our ridings. But I feel that the impression I have gained from talking to various people is that there is a general feeling of satisfaction that the government is now moving to lower the age for old age security from 70 to 65, even if the first move will be delayed for a couple of years, and in spite of the fact that there is some bewilderment as to why it is necessary to do this in stages.

I could go a little further, Mr. Chairman, and say that the feeling I have received from talking to people in my area about the pension plan and the old age security plan is that people prefer the old age security plan. There are certainly a lot of people who do not need a pension who will get it. I am not sure whether their feeling about avoiding a means test is because they do not like a means test or whether the administration cost involved in ascertaining who needs it and who does not would amount to more than the actual payments to those who have no need for it. In any event, the general feeling seems to be that this type of payment is preferred.

Next, I have found a general feeling among people, even those who have not at the moment a pension plan, that in this day and age of rapidly advancing cost of living there is a predominant interest in the amount of take home pay received. People who work in factories and plants which offer some sort of company pension plan, or people with their own private pension plan, find that there are so many deductions being made from their pay cheques that it is becoming harder and harder to meet each week's bills as they come in, and the thought of even one more deduction fills them with considerable dismay.

I am not aware how much this proposal is going to cost each year. I admit that I should be aware, but I have not got the figures in front of me at the moment. How-