

*Canada Pension Plan*

say, Quebec, that if this bill goes through, and if Quebec passes its own bill, they will agree to do this.

**Mr. Benson:** Yes, that is correct.

**Mr. Enns:** I did not hear the reply. Was the minister saying that everyone would be registered even though a province was opting out?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Oh yes, Mr. Chairman. The reason I am replying to this question is that the unemployment insurance commission has already undertaken very substantial registration. In fact more than six million persons have been registered through the commission for social insurance numbers. About a million of those persons have registered voluntarily and it is understood that the social insurance numbers which have already been issued will be made available to the province of Quebec. I understand that discussions have already opened to this end and there is an understanding that these numbers will be available for their plan.

**Mr. Enns:** If the contributions will not be going to the federal treasury is it still mandatory for residents of Quebec to take a social insurance number?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, it will be necessary, for identification purposes, for every person to have a number. The number data will be made available to the province of Quebec for identification purposes.

**Mr. Enns:** In other words, Mr. Chairman, this is a service of an administrative aspect provided by the federal government for the benefit of the province of Quebec, which really is not otherwise part of the plan?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Chairman, we have already registered, for unemployment insurance purposes, a very large number of persons in the province of Quebec. A very large number of persons have registered, as they have in other parts of Canada. I understand that from 80 per cent to 90 per cent of persons who may be eligible for the Canada pension plan have already registered; so that it makes sense to use the same system.

**Mr. Enns:** One more question, please, Mr. Chairman. I wish to advise the minister that I am among those who have registered, and I am glad to have my number. My last question on the subject is this. Is this social security number used for any purpose other than the Canada pension plan? Is there any other benefit in having this number?

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Chairman, as we indicated at the time the numbers were issued for unemployment insurance, the intention was to utilize the regular issuance of books for the unemployment insurance system for the anticipated purpose of the Canada pension plan. Therefore this is in line with the originally stated purpose, namely that the social insurance number would also be used for the Canada pension plan. We stated in our advertisements that it would be used for social benefit purposes, and this is the only other social benefit purpose that was mentioned or intended.

**Mr. Enns:** Yes, but at the present moment surely one is eligible for unemployment insurance without this number. It would appear that the only reason for having this social security number is for the purposes of the Canada pension plan.

**Mr. MacEachen:** No, Mr. Chairman. It has always been compulsory, since the inception of the unemployment insurance system, to have a number. The regulations that make it possible to assign a social insurance number followed from the law itself. No person could be eligible for unemployment insurance today without a social insurance number.

**Mr. Enns:** I have another question, Mr. Chairman, for my own clarification. Is the minister saying that really the whole registration program in connection with social security numbers is not a duplication of the unemployment insurance numbers; that is, persons who have an unemployment insurance number do not need to register again for a social security number? Is this correct?

**Mr. MacEachen:** That is right, Mr. Chairman; that is, persons who have already registered and have been assigned a social insurance number need not register again. As I have stated, I think, 6,314,000 applications have been received and numbers have been issued. There may be some duplication, though. These applications do not necessarily represent the total number of persons, but these numbers have already been issued. Persons holding numbers need not register again for this plan, under this law.

**Mr. Monteith:** Mr. Chairman, I am just wondering what the minister meant by saying there might be some duplication.

**Mr. MacEachen:** I understand it is possible that persons who applied for a number, moved to another job and got a number with the new employer after having obtained a number with their former employer, might