

tarily whether or not they have sufficient income. The hon. member for Moose Jaw suggested a method by which the producer may be able to get around this problem by averaging his net income between the years 1965 and 1972.

If there is difficulty not only for the producer who wishes to contribute voluntarily to the Canada Pension Plan but for other groups such as housewives, there may be a need to consider revising it entirely to enable such people to participate. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommended that the housewife should be allowed to contribute. We know that the farm housewife is often actively engaged in the labour of the farm. I hope that the departments concerned, the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of Agriculture, can come up with a plan so that farmers and housewives—just taking these two examples—can contribute voluntarily to the Canada Pension Plan in order to obtain its benefits in their retirement years.

I was somewhat disturbed by the fears expressed by the hon. member for Moose Jaw concerning the onslaught of a welfare state. This program was established to protect producers and others in their retirement years. I do not consider it welfare; I consider it part of the type of scheme available to a person in a welfare state. The hon. member's motion would make the plan available to the producers of western Canada. However, somewhere between his philosophy and the motion, his logic has gone astray when he deals with the free enterprise system and all that goes with it.

If we are to go back to the free enterprise system we should abolish the Canada Pension Plan, the medicare plan such as we have in Saskatchewan, hospitalization, some equalization payments, unemployment insurance, etc., and go back to the dog eat dog attitude of Tory conservatism. I support the motion but I point out my concern regarding the very weak defence of the free enterprise system which no longer exists.

I am sure other hon. members wish to speak to the motion, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure that before six o'clock the government will allow it to come to a vote and pass. The subject could then be brought before the conference in April which the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Corriveau) mentioned, where it could be discussed along with other changes to the Canada Pension Plan as they relate to housewives and other groups and the possibility that they could take part in the plan.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary wish to ask a question?

**Mr. Léopold Corriveau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, could I answer the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) because a moment ago I did not understand his question? I do not insist on answering his question but I would like to tell him, with reference to the question he asked, that some studies may have been done in this field but I did not examine them. That is what I wanted to tell the hon. member a moment ago.

### Canada Pension Plan

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** I think the hon. parliamentary secretary gave the answer he could have given had he had the unanimous consent. Now I think we will listen to the next speaker, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

[English]

**Mr. Norman A. Cafik (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, in my view, motion No. 15 proposed by the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) is important and touches upon a subject of great concern not only to farmers but to many groups in our society, those working in small businesses, the self-employed, and so on. As the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Corriveau) so ably pointed out, the principle underlying the motion before the House is one that would have to be carried through to cover all these other people if we intend equity to prevail.

• (1740)

Speaking as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare who is to some degree involved in the question even though the Canada Pension Plan comes more under the responsibility of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) than under the responsibility of my minister. Let me say that our department has certain responsibilities as they affect health and welfare and is concerned about this particular problem. The matter is being taken under active consideration.

May I point out to hon. members that this question cannot be resolved by the House alone. The Canada Pension Plan was entered into by agreement with the provinces and cannot be adjusted unless there is agreement by two-thirds of the provinces representing two-thirds of the population of Canada. That means that if there is to be a change along lines suggested by the hon. member—and apparently this kind of suggestion has come forward on previous occasions and has affected the involvement in the plan—of various groups in our society it would be necessary for agreement to be reached with the provinces.

As hon. members may recall, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) has indicated in this House on previous occasions that a federal-provincial conference of welfare ministers is to take place in Ottawa in April, and at that time the provincial ministers and federal Minister of National Health and Welfare will look at the entire problem of social security in Canada with the intention of relating these programs one to another in such a way that we shall obtain in an organized way maximum benefits for Canadians.

The provinces have been asked to come forward with model proposals for consideration by the federal government, and the federal government has indicated that it will come forward with model proposals on the matter of social security for consideration by the provinces. I understand that the whole question of the Canada Pension Plan will be discussed at that federal-provincial conference. If agreement is reached by all levels of government, then I believe and hope that some action will be forthcoming.

I should like to touch on one or two points which have been raised with respect to this question. They relate to assistance given by the federal government, sometimes