

● (2240)

SECURITY—RECIPROCAL AGREEMENTS ON PENSIONS WITH  
FOREIGN COUNTRIES—POSSIBLE AGREEMENT WITH UNITED  
KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday, October 21, as reported in *Hansard* at page 552, I put the following question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare:

In view of the fact that several years have gone by since the government launched an effort to secure reciprocal agreements on pensions with a number of countries and in view of the fact that thus far only one such reciprocal agreement has been put into effect, can the minister say whether the government is now prepared to activate this program in the hope that the reciprocal agreements might be reached fairly soon?

Sir, when parliament, back in 1965, passed the Canada Pension Plan, we included in that legislation provision for reciprocal agreements with countries having social security legislation more or less like ours. A couple of years after that, with the kind of fanfare for which Liberals are famous, a commencement was made on the achieving of a number of these reciprocal agreements, but so far only one has been achieved, namely, an agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany, which I think was signed in 1971.

I believe that discussions have been held with certain other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, possibly France and I believe Italy, but as yet no agreements have been reported with any of these countries. The reason that we are interested in reciprocal agreements is that there are persons from these other countries now living in Canada who are denied either pensions in the first instance, or increases in pensions paid by the countries from which they came because of the lack of a reciprocal agreement.

I hope, therefore, that this excellent program which, as I say, grew out of the Canada Pension Plan and was started in the late sixties, might get moving again.

I did not take time to read the minister's answer to me on October 21, and I hope he will not read it to me again tonight either. The gist of it is that we are always ready to agree, provided the other side will agree. We are prepared to give our pensions to Canadians in other countries, but we will not do it without an appropriate quid pro quo from the other side.

I hope that tonight the minister will not simply try to win the argument by having the last word and repeating what he said on October 21, but that he will agree with me that it is important to many persons now living in Canada that these reciprocal agreements be achieved. I hope he will indicate that somewhere a fire will be set under somebody so that the program will be advanced and a number of reciprocal agreements achieved at an early date.

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, as he indicated, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) brought up this matter on October 21 last, and he is bringing it up again. In fact, he would like the government to activate the negotiation of reciprocal agreements with other countries

*Adjournment Debate*

in the field of social security and more specifically in that of pensions.

That was basically the essence of his intervention on October 21 when he suggested more specifically that there was a meeting of minds in this respect between the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada.

I should like to point out that the technical discussions in which the civil servants have taken part in recent months, namely with their United Kingdom counterparts, have brought to light some of the difficulties parliament, and I repeat, parliament will have to overcome if Canada is to pursue a policy designed to protect the vested interests of people who immigrate to Canada or who emigrate from Canada.

As I indicated in my preliminary answer on October 21 last, the basic question to those bilateral agreements is always that of knowing how much the other countries are willing to give up in exchange for the outstandings privileges available in Canada in social security.

[English]

"To activate the program," as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would have it, involves a number of problems for this parliament, on the legal and constitutional planes among others. I know of no country, for example, which would be interested in an agreement on old age pensions without including the Canadian Old Age Security program. At the present time there is no provision in the legislation for OAS to be included in international agreements. In addition, certain countries are not interested in an international social security agreement involving old age pensions alone. They would wish to have included programs covering other contingencies which, in the Canadian context, involve programs of differing jurisdictions, some of which have no provision for international agreements.

The one agreement to which the hon. member referred in his question last week is our convention on social security with the Federal Republic of Germany, to which the hon. member again referred to tonight. This is not a standard agreement. I should perhaps explain that pension benefits to which entitlement has been earned under the laws of the Federal Republic of Germany are not normally payable to aliens outside that country unless it has a convention with their country of nationality. The underlying purpose of our convention with the Federal Republic of Germany, therefore, is to provide for the payment in Canada, to Canadian citizens and other persons, of pension benefits to which entitlement has been earned under German law.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, every time the government feel that it is of benefit to immigrants and Canada to seek out new reciprocal and bilateral agreements on social security, I shall be pleased to indicate to hon. members what measures will have to be taken to implement such a policy.