

*Canada Pension Plan (No. 2)*

The present inflation is the acceleration of a movement which began around 1940 and has now resulted in an overall yearly increase in prices of 8 to 15 per cent in the United States, in Europe and in Japan; food prices increase even more.

Inflation is greater in the twentieth century than in any previous century. Prices have nearly tripled since 1900!

This proves that inflation is not Canada's prerogative. It is a world wide problem, as shown by the above article.

Moreover, during the debate on inflation brought about by Conservative members on September 10, 1973, the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) delivered a speech on the problems of inflation, unemployment and economy in general, and he quoted some statistics relating to the level of inflation in different countries. I want to quote an excerpt from his speech:

In spite of the threatening pressures, Canada's performance record, both over the long and short terms, compares favourably with that of other nations. Throughout the 1960's Canada, together with Germany, experienced the lowest rate of increase in consumer prices of all the western industrial nations. Between 1970 and the middle of this year, the increase in the cost of living in this country was the second lowest among the eight leading industrial nations, namely Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Holland.

In the 12 months period ending in June, the rise in the Canadian consumer price index ranked third lowest among the eight nations.

● (2050)

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, it was important to make the House aware of those facts. Throughout the debate on the Canada Pension Plan bill, there have been several references to inflation, obviously a related problem since this bill is a further measure aiming at offsetting its often disastrous effects.

Another member raised the matter this afternoon, that is the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) who eloquently denounced the discrimination that seems to exist against women. She made a very good speech as she does every time she rises in this House. However, I will refer her to the press release issued on October 11 and 12 by the conference of welfare ministers where the following can be read in part and I quote:

The federal and provincial governments have noted during this conference that still other questions concerning the CPP and the QPP will require their attention, especially those relating to the equality of sexes, the contributions to be paid and the benefits for spouses who are not contributors.

And it goes on listing other existing problems which will be put right through the eventual introduction of a bill as announced by the minister himself.

In my opinion, Bill C-224 originated on January 4, 1973 when the throne speech contained this very explicit paragraph which resulted in the introduction of this bill:

Subject to the appropriate agreement being reached with the Provinces, changes to improve the Canada Pension Plan will be introduced to provide higher pensions for widows, widows with dependent children and the disabled and to make other needed amendments.

To emphasize this objective set forth in the Speech from the Throne, on September 4, 1973, the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) made a speech in the House of Commons on the food, cost of living and inflation problem. He said:

[Mr. Leblanc (Laurier).]

Second, legislation will be introduced to remove the 2 per cent ceiling on the annual escalation of pensions paid under the Canada Pension Plan. The provinces will be asked for their support of this change, as required by law. Paralleling this change in the CPP, legislation has been introduced today to remove the 2 per cent ceiling on cost of living increases of pensions paid to retired employees of the Government of Canada.

As we all know, that last measure has already been passed by Parliament. We are now dealing with the first measure announced by the Prime Minister in the Speech from the Throne and the statement he made on September 4. Surely members of the opposition should not take the credit for that bill as did two members when we discussed the bill on family allowances. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) took the credit for the increased amounts of family allowances. I think it would be rather difficult at this time to try and take the credit for this bill on the Canada Pension Plan introduced by the minister.

I think that the tremendous work done by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) since January 4 should also be noted. Indeed, I have been sitting in the House of Commons for 10 years and I have yet to see a minister introduce over a period of 10 months six bills one after the other, pilot them himself and always be present in the House. That means that the minister took the time not only to pilot the bills he introduced, but also to supervise their drafting. He also had, as we all do, to look after his constituents.

The following bills were introduced since January 4: Bill C-147, and Act to amend the Old Age Security Act; Bill C-190, an Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan; Bill C-211, an Act to provide for the payment of family allowances; Bill C-219, an Act to amend the Old Age Security Act; Bill C-223, an Act to amend the Family Allowances Act and the Youth Allowances Act.

And today we have Bill C-224, and the minister assures us that there is another bill under preparation.

● (2100)

Once again, I think the opposition members should be applauding the minister for the enormous amount of work he has accomplished.

When you consider that the minister's budget stands for more than a quarter of the total budget of the federal government and that because of the adoption of many pieces of legislation the supplementary estimates will have to be increased, it must also be considered that the minister's budget is more significant than that of any province. Indeed, if you compare his budget with that of Quebec, you will find that the minister alone is doing the work of 110 members of the Quebec National Assembly since he is administering by himself a budget in excess of \$6 billion.

I think one point must be emphasized. The whole of the Quebec population did realize yesterday how the federal government was helping Quebecers since they have massively voted for the Liberal party while the other parties have been flatly beaten and this thanks only to the good federal-provincial relations maintained by our minister with his ten provincial counterparts.