

Canada Pension Plan Amendment

The principle for us to consider should be the right of women in law, economic law, to enjoy the same benefits as men in a partnership which our society calls marriage. The fact that in some cases one of the partners chooses to remain in the home and to accept, I suppose, both the joy and burden of governing and caring for the entire family in the homestead, should not preclude that person but in fact should provide an additional right for that individual to share in the benefits of the economic results of the other spouse's working. I do not mean to be trifling when I say that the point of identifying the housewife as an employee could be considered well intentioned but there are a growing number of male persons who might very well be included in such definition of "employee" in so far as the Canada Pension Plan is concerned. So we cannot arrive at a solution to this problem of women's rights to pensions simply by including the word "housewife" within the definition of "employee."

The problems which can be referred to, it seems to me, should be taken in two basic divisions. One is that as this private member's public bill is now drafted it would result, I think, in considerable inequity in respect of wives and families which are not economically or financially better off, because if voluntary contributions were to be the rule of the day, then obviously housewives in preferred financial situations would be in a better position to make voluntary contributions than wives of low wage earners. In that regard I think one should mention that the Income Tax Act provides, under section 79, for any individual, regardless of sex, particular economic income or activity, to deduct from their income—if I recall correctly—the lesser of either 10 per cent of income or \$2,500. What is proposed is on the right track on the principle that it has nothing whatsoever to do with the sex of a person who makes the contribution to their own pension plan.

The second problem which somewhat concerns me in respect of including a housewife in the definition of "employee" is the difficulty referred to by both the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) and the hon. member for Saint-Michel. That is the problem of what happens in the case of separation or divorce or any other change in the legal status of the person involved. What I should like to see in the final analysis is a situation where the whole family, both in the sense of its status as a total family and in the sense of the rights continuing in the event a family should suffer a breakdown, including the father, the mother and the children, would have all the economic rights available in Canada and equal access to all government-sponsored benefit plans.

Until we arrive at the stage where we are prepared to submit legislation to this House the result of which would be that women are truly equated with men both in an income and legal sense, then I suggest this bill as it now stands has the merit of raising the problem, pinpointing and spotlighting it, but it does not at all resolve the problem. I would rather see us put more thought and time into this subject, rather than put definitions into the Canada Pension Plan, the result of which would be to recognize the absolute and complete legal right of every woman in Canada to share in all the family benefits provided by our government and our economic system.

[Mr. Blaker.]

Mr. B. Keith Penner (Thunder Bay): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Waterloo-Cambridge (Mr. Saltsman) at the conclusion of his speech pleaded that we allow this bill to go to committee. It has been made abundantly clear during this debate that the bill has a number of defects. I am not suggesting there is no value in its going to the committee, because certainly those difficulties would become obvious to hon. members participating in the committee's work. However, it is clear that this procedure could be followed during discussion on the paper tabled by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) which agrees in principle that homemakers in this country should be able to participate in the Canada Pension Plan and provide for security of income at a later date. I think a discussion on that paper would accomplish exactly what the hon. member wants, and that is an open discussion on the issue of including homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION ACT

PROVISION OF EXPORT CHARGE, COMPENSATION FOR OIL IMPORT COSTS AND REGULATION OF PRICE OF CANADIAN CRUDE IN INTERPROVINCIAL AND EXPORT TRADE

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale) that Bill C-18, to impose a charge on the export of crude oil and certain petroleum products, to provide compensation for certain oil import costs and to regulate the price of Canadian crude oil in interprovincial and export trade, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, just before five o'clock I was dealing with the clauses of the bill. For a few moments I wish to discuss with the House clause 21. Clause 21 deals with the agreement made between the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on behalf of Canada and the premiers on behalf of the provinces. As recorded at page 1244 of *Hansard*, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) said:

One of the strange things about this pricing mechanism is that we are being asked to approve it although there is no written agreement. Clause 21 of the bill makes reference to an agreement, but goes on to provide that the agreement need not be expressed in any formal