

Canada Pension Plan

of course, that an election must follow, and the committee has not completed its hearings by that time, it would mean the death of the Canada pension plan, and this would be a regrettable state of affairs. But past experience of the Liberal party both here in Ottawa and in various provinces leads me to suspect that this may happen. In that way the Liberal party would be able to sell the idea of the Canada pension plan to the contributors, or potential contributors, in this nation in exchange for votes and support while at the same time allaying the fears of the insurance companies that the plan would actually be put into effect. If what I am suggesting does take place it would be another blot on the record of the Liberal party, a record which is filled with instances of chicanery and double dealing in such affairs as this.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Howard: Hon. members opposite may chortle but they need only read a little of the history of their party to realize that this is the case.

An hon. Member: What about the C.C.F. party?

Mr. Howard: Occasionally we hear these bleatings from the other side when they feel their honour is pricked and wounded, but I am merely telling them something which is a fact. I do not have any great expectations at the moment that this bill will finally get on to the statute books of Canada, if it is correct that the government is doing all it can to engineer an election this spring, and my doubts will not be allayed unless steps are taken to guarantee that this committee which is already established will be able to continue sitting continuously from now until its hearings are completed, and find itself in the position to be able to report to this present session of parliament. This would mean having to forgo the usual arrangements for dissolution and the calling of a new session of parliament. The present session would have to continue, and if we arranged for this to happen only because of the pension plan it would be a worth-while undertaking. It would mean we should have to continue the present session of parliament, even though it might extend into the middle of next year. By agreement—and agreement appears to be available any time the leader of the house wants it, these days—arrangements could be made for the resumption of private members' hours on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and for

[Mr. Howard.]

the putting forward of the various supply motions so that we could consider the estimates of the next fiscal year and so on. Some agreement could be reached about arranging for a speech from the throne, if we really needed to have one, as well as about those other proceedings in parliament which normally follow the calling of a new session.

I submit that the only course open to the government at the moment is to attempt to keep this session of parliament in being until such time as the committee which is studying this bill has an opportunity to report back to us. We can thus guarantee that at least it will not die on the order paper as a result of prorogation, and can hope that dissolution will not take place until such time as we have the law on the statute books. Unless the government are willing to do this, I think we are quite justified in making the accusation against them that they are not really sincere about proceeding with even this watered down version of a pension plan. Mr. Speaker, I had other remarks that I would have made, but these in essence were made by my colleague the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) and others in this party who have spoken; therefore I will not take the time of the house to repeat those contentions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Marvin Gelber (York South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce my few remarks on the Canada pension plan with a quotation from Psalms which has been chanted through the ages:

Cast me not off in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth.

Provision for old age through the social welfare state expresses not alone our social conscience but reflects the transformation of our society from a rural to an urban one. The patriarchal society which was historic presented no special problem as long as the moral responsibility for old people was recognized. The aged and the young lived together and respect for the fathers was the norm of the civilized community. On the other hand we must provide through these present special measures, partly because of our growing individualism. We no longer think in family terms to the extent that our ancestors did. The young wish to be free and the old do not wish to be dependant. In the patriarchal society and in rural society, the older members of the family participated as of right and not by grace of the good will of their