

Canada Pension Plan

would keep free from the interference of any members of the cabinet or the government itself.

Mr. Rhéaume: I want to ask a question that is of concern to me. Where a province is not under the Canada pension plan, where it chooses to operate its own either right away as in the case of Quebec or in the future, and may devise some other method of identification and filing, then I am sure the hon. lady and her staff have devised some way of dealing with those people who may move in or out of a particular province whereby the number they had previously will remain active. In this way, there would be no bar to a person moving in and out, regardless of the system some other province may develop. If we could have that assurance, it would remove any doubts I may have.

Mr. Benson: The number system, when established, will be such that each person in Canada will have one number. This number will be used for no one else. If at some subsequent date one of the provinces should decide to move out of the Canada pension plan, the easy method for them would be to take the same number because there is no danger of duplication in the whole of Canada. A person might have benefits coming from two sources, because of the arrangements made. They might have benefits coming from the Canada pension plan and from the provincial pension plan. It would make it much easier to deal with the individuals involved if the same numbers were continued.

Mr. Clancy: Will the minister say that there will be no means test, and that you can draw both pensions?

Mr. Moore: Will this government department have the same access to the information concerning the residents of opting out provinces as they have for the residents of provinces that do not opt out?

Mr. Benson: I think I dealt with this question earlier. In the case of dual contributors or contributors to a pension plan which is outside the Canada pension plan, and the Canada pension plan, there is provision in the legislation for an exchange of information. Other than that, there would not be any necessity for an exchange of information and it is not provided for.

Mr. Clancy: You say there is no necessity for an exchange of information. What about our private pension plans? Are we going to [Mr. Caouette.]

be subjected, under the Canada pension plan, to a means test or are we not?

Miss LaMarsh: I know that the hon. member has been busy in his office and has not had an opportunity to be here as much as some others. I know too he is concerned about private pension plans. May I say there is absolutely nothing in this legislation that has anything to do with private pension plans, no means test or anything else with regard to them. There is no right in the federal government to deal with them on a Canada-wide basis. I hope that allays his fears, and we will now be able to move through the sections. We have covered over 100 sections in the last six days, and it was the hope we could reach the end of this bill and return to the sections that have been stood.

Mr. Clancy: I should like to thank the minister for the assurance that there will be no change in the regulations.

Mr. Skoreyko: I just want to refer, if I may, to the question of social insurance numbering. I know that the affable Minister of National Health and Welfare will not mind answering this question, in view of the fact that a moment ago she said the social insurance numbering system is not imposed by this legislation. I am interested, if the minister will answer, in the numbering scheme as it is applied or as it is put into effect under the U.I.C. today. Is it compulsory? If it is not compulsory, and I understand it is not, then is the numbering scheme under social insurance compulsory to qualify for a pension under the Canada pension plan? Can you draw a pension if you refuse to apply for a number, as a lot of people I know have done?

One matter with which I had considerable dealings in recent weeks has been unemployment insurance. You cannot qualify for unemployment insurance unless you have applied for a social insurance number. If a Canadian citizen refuses to apply for this number, will he still be able to qualify for a pension? If the rule applies to western Canada and the rest of Canada that if you do not apply for a number, and you do not then qualify for a pension scheme, how does this affect the province of Quebec?

Miss LaMarsh: As was explained thoroughly, if you are in the labour force and are at present covered by unemployment insurance, it was compulsory last year to be numbered. It was open also—and you will remember there were advertisements—to individuals such as myself who did not have