

Canada Pension Plan

Mr. Lambert: Mr. Chairman, although I represent a practically 100 per cent urban riding, I do wish to bring to the attention of the minister a few points along the same line as the argument advanced by the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary. I believe this plan is an urban-oriented plan, designed primarily for a wage earner or salaried person, and not for those large masses of self-employed people in the country. I am thinking primarily of the grain farmer. The eastern people are not concerned with this, but the western grain farmer is subject to quota regulations. We have seen time and time again that, as a result of marketing conditions, the quota in the latter months of the year is limited to the basic one and two bushel quotas; therefore the majority of the man's income for the year is translated into the subsequent year. There is no privilege of averaging out. If the farmer's expenses are incurred in the year when he is preparing for his crop, the only thing that is delayed is the realization on the crop. I think the inability to average out is unfair to this large category of Canadian citizens, and I just cannot see the justification for it. The self-employed person has as much right to participate in the Canada pension plan to the maximum as any salaried person or wage earner. Yet, because of the inequality of the flow of income, the farmer class, particularly those who are subject to quota regulations over which they have no control, do not have the same participation in this plan as do other people. I do not know how the minister has figured this out, but if a man has taken a cash advance for farm stored grain, how is his income going to be determined? These are the points that I think we want to get straightened out before we go any further with this particular clause, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend and the hon. member who preceded him are not dealing at all with this clause of the bill. Clause 13 of the bill deals with the question of income, and it is a clause that has already been approved by this committee. I made a rather long statement indicating the reasons for our not permitting averaging under this particular clause. If my hon. friends will look back at *Hansard* they will see what my explanation was. An amendment was moved by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni which was defeated, and the clause was carried. I do not think it would serve any purpose in this committee if I were to give that explanation again. My calculation, based

[Mr. Pugh.]

on the figure which I was given at lunchtime, is that under the Canada pension plan 16 per cent of the farmers will not be covered, compared with a national average under the Canada pension plan of over 92 per cent coverage. But 84 per cent of the farmers will be covered according to the figures I quoted to my hon. friend.

Mr. Danforth: Mr. Chairman, I should like to pose a question to the minister on the basis of his figures. He said 92 per cent of the farmers would be covered. The d.b.s. figures we have—

Mr. Benson: No, I said 84 per cent. The figures I quoted were not based on d.b.s. figures but on an analysis of the tax returns of farmers.

Mr. Pugh: Except those in Quebec.

Mr. Benson: Yes, outside of the province of Quebec. The 92 per cent figure is the entire labour force in Canada, including self-employed persons.

Mr. Danforth: In the minister's figures which he gave us this morning he said that roughly 6,300,000 of the labour force would be covered, compared with a total labour force of 6,700,000, or perhaps it was 6,800,000 or 6,900,000. Are we to understand from the minister's calculation that all of the self-employed small store owners, small businessmen, individual lumbermen, small lumber operators, self-employed fishermen, farmers, and so on, are all taken into the difference of 600,000 between the two figures quoted this morning? In the minister's opinion these people will constitute the total number in Canada who will not be covered under the category of either employed or self-employed.

Mr. Benson: The figure I quoted of 6,920,000 was supplied to the Department of National Health and Welfare and constitutes the total labour force in Canada, including both self-employed persons and persons who are employed. Of this total labour force, which includes, as I say, all the self-employed farmers, fishermen, and various others, some 559,000 will not be covered by the Canada pension plan or the Quebec pension plan. This will amount to a figure of 7.9 per cent over the whole of Canada.

Arising out of the question raised this morning, during the lunch hour I had my officials prepare a summary of an analysis of tax returns of farmers in Canada, adjusting this for farmers outside of Quebec who would be under the Canada pension plan and also adjusting it for the persons who had not