

Canada Pension Plan

course they have no intention of fulfilling. For example, there are municipal loans for schools; national housing loans for existing houses—there are a great number. However, I will refer only to the promises pertinent to the question we are discussing today. Under the subheading "Pensions" there is another heading that says, "Make possible retirement at half pay at 65". This was the first Canada pension plan the Liberals proposed. I ask hon. members to just compare that with the proposal that is now before us. This advertisement also mentions a maximum pension of \$296 per month for a couple. It goes on to say that the Liberal party would establish a new national minimum of a \$75 a month pension. In this regard the advertisement says that the pension will not be a tax on the people, in effect, because it will come out of contributions.

I would ask the house to remember what actually happened to the \$10. On July 18, when the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss LaMarsh) introduced the second Liberal plan into the house, we moved that the \$10 be paid immediately. At that time, of course, every Liberal member in the house voted against it; but in due course, because of constant pressure from members on this side, the government finally gave in and on September 30 last they brought in an amendment to the Old Age Security Act. However, that increase which we all supported cost the taxpayers of Canada \$116 million a year; in other words, it was not paid out of contributions, as was promised by the Liberals.

There has been a great deal of bungling on the part of the government—that is of course no surprise; it is quite common with it—particularly with regard to the Canada pension plan. As I said, the first plan was introduced by the minister on July 18, 1963. Last night the hon. member for Essex West tried to justify all these convolutions the government has gone through in arriving at the present plan by saying that all this was necessary in order to arrive at the best plan possible. But this of course is not what the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss LaMarsh) said at the time she introduced the first plan. I quote from page 2343 of *Hansard* for 1963, where the minister is reported as having said:

This government has taken three months.

She had said before that it would normally take other governments that are not as smart as the present government two years to prepare a plan.

[Mr. Chatterton.]

I say without partisan taint that the exact time of payment is dependant upon the speed with which this chamber adopts the plan.

In other words, according to the minister it was entirely a matter for the house as to how soon this offspring of theirs would be given life. Again I quote from page 2346 of *Hansard*, where the minister is reported as having said:

Since taking office, we have been working steadily to explore the best type of scheme for Canada. We believe that the scheme now placed before parliament will commend itself to the house—

That was what the minister said at the time; this was the ultimate creation and test of the ingenuity of the Liberal government. Then of course the second attempt was made on March 17 this year, when the minister introduced another resolution for the Canada pension plan, and then the bill, Bill No. C-75. Right up to the very end there has been bungling and fumbling on the part of the government, because even as of now the appendices to the actuarial report are not available to us. We did not get a copy of the actuarial report until the night before last, and at the time of first reading only 100 copies of the bill were available. This brings to mind the fact that during September last the government was obviously anxious for us to continue the flag debate. At that time we demanded that it discontinue the flag debate and bring on the Canada pension plan. As a matter of fact, on two occasions—September 3 and September 8—there was a motion before the house to adjourn the flag debate, presumably so that we could go on with the Canada pension plan. On both these occasions every Liberal in the house voted against the motion, and of course every Conservative voted for it. It is now obvious that the real reason the government wanted to continue the flag debate at that time was because the legislation was not ready.

I will now refer to some of the provisions of Bill No. C-136. We are at second reading stage, which means we are dealing with the principle of the bill. I want to outline for the government what I consider are some weaknesses in the bill as presented. However, I will start by saying that in spite of what the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett) tried to imply last night no member on this side has opposed a contributory pension plan. We have tried to show up weaknesses, we have tried to suggest improvements and we have asked questions. I repeat that we are in favour of a contributory pension plan, but we feel that the proposal made by the government can be improved.