

Canada Pension Plan

ratio of contributions to benefits, though those contributions were not necessarily tied to the so-called earnings related formula as closely as is the federal plan, would this be considered to be a similar or a comparable plan?

Miss LaMarsh: It is difficult to say. We would have to look at it on its merits. Surely the principle in deciding whether or not something is comparable is: Are the benefits as good, or better, the nature of this plan being a guarantee to an individual contributor that he will get back the money paid into the plan. If the contribution rate were somewhat lower, if it were a pay as you go plan without reserves of any kind, but the benefits were about the same, it might well be comparable. This would have to be considered when the legislation was drafted. As must be readily apparent, such schemes are not drafted overnight and I have no doubt that if another plan were being arranged provincially we should be consulted many times by the officials of that province. Having had a couple of years experience in these matters, now, I might also say there are not really an endless number of factors which can be taken and mixed up so as to produce a different end result. These things are interrelated. Once one factor is moved, others have to be moved.

Mr. Olson: The minister has told us that a plan, to be comparable, must provide benefits similar to those provided under the Canada pension plan. The formula used in this bill represents the calculation of benefits on the basis of earnings, not on the basis of contributions. I can understand the minister saying that benefits have to be comparable. But related to what? Do they have to be related to earnings or can they be related to contributions, as is the case in most of the private pension plans now in existence?

Miss LaMarsh: I think this would have to depend on the term "related" and just how related it is. I very much doubt that any federal government of the day would find legislation to be comparable if it was going to deprive individuals in a province of any benefits toward which they had made contributions over the years.

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Chairman, I had a question that related to the point raised by the hon. member for Medicine Hat, as to what the minister had in mind when she said it had to be comparable to the federal plan or this national scheme. The question I had in mind was, would it have to be similar in benefits, and the minister answered that. Would it

have to be similar in structure? I am referring, of course, to the plan in its entire form. I imagine that with some other plans you would not have to proceed in the same manner at all. I am just wondering whether the benefits would be approximately the same, or better, and the amount paid by the individual approximately the same. But if the plan in its entire form was completely different, would this conflict with the ideas which the minister expressed a few minutes ago with regard to this national plan? If the structure was entirely different, what would be the effect?

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, it would depend on the minister of the day and his or her definition of it. I must refer my hon. friend to the debate which took place back on clause 3, where this was material.

Mr. Stenson: Mr. Chairman, we are told that Quebec is not going to enter this plan. I would like to ask the minister whether this house will see the Quebec plan before we are asked to pass this plan.

Miss LaMarsh: No, Mr. Chairman—any more than Quebec saw this legislation before it was presented to this house.

Mr. Stenson: Quebec sees this legislation at the present time, but they have not had time to study it. This house will not see the Quebec plan?

Miss LaMarsh: Of course not, Mr. Chairman. That is provincial legislation, and the Quebec government has exactly the same obligation to the members of its chamber that the federal government has to the members of this house, namely, to produce legislation there before it waves it around in the air. It would be impossible, I think, and expecting far too much of human beings, to expect Quebec and Canada to bring in their resolutions on the same day and to move through their chambers at the same speed.

Mr. Knowles: Speed?

Miss LaMarsh: Indeed, before this bill is dealt with you may well see the Quebec plan enacted.

Mr. Monteith: Mr. Chairman, I am amazed at the statement the minister just made. She said something about this all depending upon the minister of the day. Surely to goodness there must be some definite understanding as to what is a comparable plan. This, to me, is the most ridiculous sort of thing that could be suggested, namely that it depends upon the minister of the day. Actually, Mr. Chair-