

CANADA WILDLIFE BILL

PROVISION FOR RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS, CONTRIBUTIONS TO COSTS, AND PURCHASE, ACQUISITION OR LEASE OF LANDS

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that Bill C-131, respecting wildlife in Canada, as reported (with an amendment) from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. MacEachen (for the Minister of the Environment) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I have already tested the House on Item No. 12, crop insurance. I understand there is some wish to discuss that further so I will not try that one. I wonder whether it would be possible to deal with Item No. 43, the Canada Pension Plan. The hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Beatty) has been talking to me about the necessity for dealing with that bill. I would be happy to call it now.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we would be happy to deal with the bill, but it cannot be passed without debate. There are a few things some of us would like to say.

Mr. MacEachen: Would the hon. member be prepared to say them now?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Certainly.

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CANADA PENSION PLAN

CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEMBERS OF CERTAIN RELIGIOUS SECTS, INTEREST RATE ON DELAYED PAYMENTS, PAYMENT OF LEGAL EXPENSES

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (for the Minister of National Health and Welfare) moved that Bill C-190, to amend the Canada Pension Plan, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, could we have an explanation from the minister sponsoring this bill?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the minister is not present at the moment. We are sending for his parliamentary secretary. I am sure my understanding of the bill is quite imperfect, but the essence of the bill is to provide exemption from payments to the Canada Pension Plan for certain groups, particularly the Mennonite community and the Hutterites. That is the basic purpose of the bill.

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Mr. Speaker, I rise with some trepidation because we seem to have made a great deal of progress rather quickly. There was no notice that this bill would be called. I had wanted to take some time to speak on the matter, but I do not have all my

Canada Pension Plan

material. Perhaps the House will bear with me under those circumstances.

It is too bad we do not have somebody from the executive to explain the bill in a little more detail than has been done by the government House leader. As I understand the bill, it is to exempt two main classes from contributions to the Canada Pension Plan, the Mennonite people and the members of the Hutterian Brethren.

This amendment is not really in the spirit of the governing legislation, the Canada Pension Plan, which is to provide universal coverage of social security for everyone in Canada. I wish to say at the outset I have never been a great fan of the Canada Pension Plan. It was passed by this chamber before I had the honour of being a member; therefore I did not have anything to do with its being placed on our statute books.

I have always distrusted and have been unhappy about the legislation since its passage. One might think that, because I dislike this legislation, I would not be taking this opportunity of suggesting that these classes of people should not be exempt. All I can say is that any piece of legislation that is of general application should be applicable to everybody. I might feel different if I could bring myself within some class which would be exempt, but for some reason or other there does not seem to be any likelihood of that.

● (1520)

In order to give an indication of my distaste for this legislation, Mr. Speaker, I may say that I have not to this day made application for a social insurance number which seems to be one of the requirements of the Canada Pension Plan. Those two things were produced at the same time and the action of the government of that day was directly opposite to my very deep feeling about numbers being assigned to people and plans being imposed upon them without any direct consultation. Medicare is another similar program. We find now that many hon. members complain about shortages of doctors and medical services all over this country, and I believe it can be said that the medicare legislation has not been a great boon to large numbers of the Canadian population.

The same thing applies here; that is, it is a law of general application and no one is exempt from it. Even though it is imperfect and poor, everyone must support it. I suggest the Canada Pension Plan is not perfect by any means, but it probably is not as bad as the medicare legislation. I really do not see why those of us who do not support the Canada Pension Plan cannot be exempt from it if various other groups and organizations can be, as proposed by this legislation.

Apart from that, however, there are a great many other complications flowing from the Canada Pension Plan. The contributions from the government of Canada under that plan go into a fund and at least part of it becomes available to the provinces for provincial and municipal purposes at low rates of interest. As I understand the situation, various provinces draw from that fund in proportion to the amount of money they contribute to it. I believe it makes a great deal of difference to the provinces how much money they have contributed to the fund. I think that follows as night follows day.