

Canada Pension Plan

province of Quebec wanted to respect the fact that two cultures exist in Canada.

As a matter of fact, a few days ago I had an experience in Winnipeg, not necessarily in Winnipeg North Centre but more particularly in Winnipeg South Centre. Let me tell you what happened. I was taking part in a radio program and a gentleman called me to say: "I will question you in French although this is an English station". I told him: "Very well, but I will answer in English because we will be talking to an English speaking audience". So, I answered in English while being questioned in French. Presently, the telephone rang and a woman's voice said to me: "You are now in an English and not in a French town, and therefore you should speak English and not French". I replied that if she were in Montreal and that a similar remark were made to her, that in Montreal one has to speak French because it is a French city, what would she say? I added that I thought that in Winnipeg I was in a Canadian city just as I would be in Vancouver, Victoria or Montreal.

But reverting to the question raised by the Minister of National Revenue, I will say this. The province of Quebec announced several months ago that it would have its own pension plan. Why then is the federal government, through the Minister of National Health and Welfare or the Minister of National Revenue, telling us that Quebec should not object to unemployment insurance and social security numbers when that province has opted out of the federal plan? Why should they impose numbers on us in Quebec when that province wants to set up its own plan? That is what I want to know from the minister or the government.

[Text]

Mr. Benson: I think all I can say in answer is that I wish I were as bilingual as my hon. friend is, and that the provision within this legislation simply allows us to make the numbers available to the province of Quebec if they want to use them. We in no way affect their position with regard to operating their own pension plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Chairman, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Revenue or to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

What number will be used by the federal government's civil servants residing in the province of Quebec, the one pertaining to the

federal scheme or the one related to the provincial scheme, if the numbers are different?

[Text]

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the administration of the pension plan enacted by the legislature of the province of Quebec the federal government will, of course, have nothing to do with it. For the unemployment insurance numbers we will use the social security numbers which are being established and which, as I have said several times in the last few minutes, are simply being made available to the province of Quebec if they want to use them as well.

Mr. Caouette: Is there any connection between the authorities of Quebec and the federal authorities with regard to the establishment of that specific plan? Is it going to be the case that for the whole administration of the plan we will still have to say, "red in Quebec, red in Ottawa"? Will the minister tell me about that?

Miss LaMarsh: My hon. friend knows that there have been very long negotiations between Quebec, the other provinces and the federal government in which they have agreed, as reasonable people do, on compromises, so that the plan which has been outlined in the resolution in the Quebec legislature but has not yet been enacted there is almost identical to the legislation now before this house. There is no connection at all beyond that. If my hon. friend will look at section 103 he will see that there is provision for an agreement about this matter of numbers. There is provision later on, if they choose, that is Quebec or any other province, to use the central appeal board.

The numbers question my hon. friend has raised was dealt with in the last six days in the 103 sections already passed by the committee. This numbering system was passed almost a year ago by the house. It is simply that those who are setting up this system are using the social insurance numbers already established in principle, mainly under the U.I.C.

Mr. Caouette: I did suggest to the western part of Canada to do exactly what Quebec is doing, that is to get away from this national pension plan so that each province would look after its own plan. As I said in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Edmonton, this would then be a Judy LaMarsh plan and nothing else, nothing for the people of Canada, just a plan for the ministry in Ottawa. The provinces