

*Private Members' Business*

provincial counterparts. Hon. members will recall that although the Canada Pension Plan is administered by the federal government, it is in essence a federal-provincial program.

Major amendments to the plan require the approval of not only the Parliament of Canada but also two thirds of the provinces having two thirds of the Canadian population.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare has formally proposed to his provincial counterparts of social services the formation of a federal-provincial committee of income security and social service officials. This committee will review issues relating to the Canada Pension Plan other than financing which will remain the purview of the federal and provincial ministers.

The provinces have agreed and it is expected that the first meeting will be held early in the fall. As the hon. member can see, the federal government is actively working with the provinces to establish a mechanism to ensure that our national pension plan, the Canada Pension Plan, meets the needs of all Canadians. This new process is in keeping with the spirit of the hon. member's motion and should encourage both him and persons with disabilities that their concerns as they relate to the CPP will be addressed.

The other aspect of the hon. member's motion that I would like to speak to is the idea of programs that enable persons with disabilities to function in society. In this regard, the Canada Pension Plan is examining its role in the vocational rehabilitation of persons receiving a CPP disability pension. The CPP's involvement in the rehabilitation area is relatively recent. Previously, it had been viewed that the plan's clientele were not likely candidates for rehabilitation because of their severe and prolonged disabilities.

However, times and attitudes change and disabled people are indicating that what they want most of all is to work. They view this as the only sure-fire way out of the poverty that so many persons with disabilities currently live in. That was certainly the message that came out loud and clear at Independence '92, the International Congress and Exposition on Disability held last month in Vancouver.

In the fall of 1990, a pilot project was started to see if vocational rehabilitation was feasible for the Canada Pension Plan. The goal of the pilot project was to provide 100 CPP disability pensioners with the training, skills and/or education needed to return to suitable employment. This effort was expanded when last year, as part of the national strategy on the integration of persons with disabilities, an additional \$6 million over five years was allocated from the CPP fund to the development of rehabilitation initiatives within the CPP.

The results of the initial pilot project which wound up this spring have been encouraging from both the client's point of view and the impact on plan expenditures. The pilot project also provided valuable insights into how an expansion of rehabilitation should take place. The Department of National Health and Welfare is currently in the process of designing the next phase of rehabilitation in the Canada Pension Plan. It is expected to be operational shortly.

• (1940)

In closing, I hope my remarks have provided some information as to the achievements of the federal government in conjunction with the provinces in the area of the Canada Pension Plan.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to take the opportunity to thank the hon. member for Regina—Wascana for bringing forward this motion on a very important issue. The issue really is the value and worth of every human being in our society and how we can ensure that every individual has the opportunity to participate as fully as they are able to in society.

We have just completed National Access Awareness Week. I spent some time at various places in my own riding that are providing those kinds of services. St. Stevens residence has just opened up to provide community living for people with in some cases mental disabilities, in some cases physical disabilities and in some cases a combination of both. It is a great tribute to the people who conceived this project that a number of young people and older people who have spent the largest part of their lives in institutions are now living in the community, participating with others, participating in worship, participating in education and in work experi-