

Canada Pension Plan

state of near starvation, and I am sure he did not mean to do that, because in so doing he is not doing justice to that province we both have the privilege to represent in this House. Nor does he do justice to the proud, ancient and honourable tradition of those hard-working, God-fearing and proud people of that province. I am sure he would want to correct the record in that respect.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to stand by the record. Perhaps I should elaborate on my previous remarks by saying that in no way did I mean to downgrade the people of Newfoundland who have worked for their living for many years, and worked very hard. I do suggest that in many cases there was a question of survival. The hon. member knows as well as I the terrible conditions that existed in Newfoundland at one time.

● (1520)

He remembers the six cents a day and the dole, as I do—not personally, but through experience. Our people now are immeasurably better off in that they have a guarantee from this government of an income. I was simply putting on the record that it is certainly a godsend to our province that we will never have to go back to the days our people once faced. There was a period of great fear concerning what the future would bring. I think that fear no longer exists. In no way do I mean to say that our people are not self-sufficient. They always have been and, hopefully, always will be to the degree they can be within the context of their environment. They now have something that will keep them from a state of purely self-subsistence survival.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I very much regret that when this bill was presented on July 20 I was not in my place in this chamber. At that time I was attending an important regional meeting of the Caribbean Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It is obvious I was not on holiday, because July 20 is not the best time for one to visit the Caribbean, however beautiful those islands are and however pleasant they are to visit at any time. Therefore I missed the initial presentation of this measure.

I have read with great interest the speeches made on that day. I think the hon. member for Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo (Mr. Beatty)—an excellent member and a long-time resident of that constituency which is a wonderful part of the country but has a terribly long name—spoke with great understanding of the major aspects of this bill. I thought also that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) showed his usual understanding of these matters and his usual concern for helping people who need the kind of assistance which this kind of measure renders. The hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Roche) also spoke wisely and well. So I believe the debate has been well launched.

Although I suppose one can never predict these things, I do not think there should be a long debate. When this matter was mentioned in the committee by the minister, I told him at that time of the view of myself and my colleagues, that we would not be delaying this measure because we know it has merit and justice. So far as I can see, the only member who mentioned what I call the first

major aspect, the matter of appeals, was the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. This is a matter about which a number of my colleagues, especially my seatmate the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North (Mr. Coates), have been concerned. There was an iniquitous situation in which a citizen wishing to appeal a decision of the tribunal would not have his expenses underwritten by the government.

I am sure every member of this House welcomes what I see in this bill as a correction of an injustice. I commend the minister for bringing about this correction. Justice delayed is better than no justice at all, and we are glad this has been done. I am sure it will help people. It is very much in line with what I thought was the spirit of the legislation when it was put into effect. I have been here long enough to remember the inauguration of the Canada Pension Plan. In fact, we had three launchings and one of them finally made it. It is a complex but very important piece of legislation which means a great deal to many people.

Later in this session I hope we will be able to discuss in a fundamental way some of the matters dealt with by the hon. member who spoke recently and was checked up by my colleague from St. John's East (Mr. McGrath). There are many important issues in respect of the Canada Pension Plan, such as the matter of retirement, the ceiling and age, as well as disabled persons, which must be more carefully studied when we have the broader spectrum of the legislation before us.

On the matter of the exemption of certain groups, which received more attention than some other aspects, I want to say I am very pleased that these fine citizens have at long last—there have been quite a number of appeals—had the rightness of their position accepted. I may say that in my constituency, and in so far as I know in the province in which I am proud to live, Prince Edward Island, there are no people who belong to the Hutterite or Mennonite groups and therefore I have no special appeal in mind. However, I have had the honour to know many of these people while living in other parts of Canada and I regard them as among the finest Canadians.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: I believe it was the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher) who on July 20 referred to the virtues of these people as exemplified in their living from day to day. How wonderful it would be in our society if we could carry on the practice of earlier generations in which the older members of society were looked after by their own families. How wonderful it would be if a grandmother and grandfather could be enshrined in love and affection right in the home. At one time that was the situation in our society. It was a part of our culture. One would never think of turning the aged, loved ones over to an institution.

We realize that now this has changed. It is difficult enough now to obtain a house for the growing family. There is no such thing as a spare bedroom, let alone quarters for the grandmother and the grandfather. But these remarkable people have been able to carry through that familial affection and have been able to make adequate provision for an extended family. They have been