

Government Orders

continue to have the usual customary respectful debate we are accustomed to in this House.

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, public servants who administer these programs are required to collect personal information from millions of Canadians in order to manage these programs. It would be a tremendous administrative obstacle if clients refused to give officials of the Department of Human Resources Development personal information because they feared this information would not be adequately protected. Confidentiality provisions were made as restrictive as they are to protect Canadians from unwelcome intrusions.

However, Canadians are also concerned about criminals who have entered Canada and may be living in their midst. While Canadians value their privacy they also want justice.

[Translation]

Finally, there remains another amendment that I would like to explain to all members of the House. It is the amendment to the Old Age Security Act and the Canada Pension Plan, which results from another amendment that has been proposed by the Solicitor General.

This amendment would allow the Department of Human Resources Development to provide information on OAS and CPP benefits now paid to prison inmates. This must surely be of interest to Reform Party members.

The goal is to deduct housing and feeding costs from these inmates' income. The Solicitor General could then receive from the Department of Human Resources Development accurate information on inmates' income so he can make reasonable deductions.

Is it right that inmates are housed and fed for free and that they can accumulate income from federal benefits which are, of course, eventually paid for by the government and by Canadian taxpayers? I do not think so. Pensioners who are not criminals must pay their own housing and other costs. To ensure a minimum level of fairness and responsibility, the same principle should apply to prison inmates, especially if they also receive federal benefits.

In conclusion, I hope that my explanations have helped to establish the validity of some of the amendments in this bill and that all members now have the information they need to explain in turn these amendments to their constituents.

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, B.Q.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite is of course in favour of the bill and is telling us now that he supports it mainly for the sake of social justice. I wonder, Mr. Speaker.

• (1125)

The confidential information that he praised and which would be made available to the RCMP would just be a tool to expose some cheaters of unemployment insurance or in other areas.

The bill as presented does not contain enough measures to limit it to that. Knowing the way RCMP officers work, we noticed in past years that they used these famous lists to do their work, although this information was not available. We need only recall the Parti Quebecois's membership list. The RCMP tried to obtain a copy and then tried to see if members on that list were breaking certain laws.

So I ask the hon. member the following question: Does this bill in its present form guarantee us that the information which will be made available to the RCMP will be used only by that force and not for other unintended purposes?

Mr. Gagnon: Mr. Speaker, I think that a long time has passed since the unfortunate events of the 1970s; however, I can assure him that, under the terms of the law as proposed, we will ensure the confidentiality of information on Canadians. Nevertheless, we should still take into account the presence of some war criminals, or at least consider certain crimes against humanity that they committed. Of course, I referred to the period from 1939 to 1945, but we must still understand that others who took part in wars which are still going on, be it in Yugoslavia or Somalia or elsewhere in the world, committed crimes which are as atrocious as those committed from 1939 to 1945 for which people were charged.

Unfortunately, such people try to enter Canada and settle among us, and I believe that it is the duty of the RCMP, the Government of Canada and all hon. members here in this House to denounce the presence of any war criminals in this country.

[English]

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am a few years away from becoming a senior. The hon. member is many more years away from becoming a senior; it is way out there in front of him as he points out.

Based on the hon. member's age and notwithstanding the contributions he is making to the Canada pension plan now, all of us know there is an unfunded liability there that we are not currently accounting for that we are all paying. Knowing that, does he believe there will be sufficient funds in the account? Does he believe that future generations will be able to make the size of premium payments required for this hon. member to receive his CPP when he reaches the age of 65, whether or not he elects to get it at an earlier age? If he does not believe that, what does he think this government should do about it?