

Canada Pension Plan (No. 2)

Let the minister not think that he will get away much longer with having these groups of women coming patiently down here to Ottawa, groups such as the National Council of Women, the Business and Professional Women's Association, and the Status of Women groups from all across the country, being polite and impressed with what they hear. Furthermore, they will not go on believing him because for three years now they have been told: "we will seriously consider the matter. There are many ways in which the matter of pensions can be looked at". That is what the orange paper said, and the white paper said something similar. The women want their recommendations embodied in the Canada Pension Plan now.

Something has occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, and now I must put in a word of criticism. I think that yesterday the minister was very cavalier and offhand in the way he treated the delegation of the National Council of Women when they came to ask that old age security pensions be raised to \$150 a month. After all, they are asking for something that has already been requested, something that is popular in many sections of this country. Indeed, in the province from which I come a pension of about \$200 is assured to elderly people who have no other means of support. So, these women were not asking for something impractical. Yet, according to the newspapers—perhaps the newspapers are wrong and I hope they are—the minister brushed them off with impatience saying that this would cost a big sum of money and was not practical.

I was around here long before the minister, and I remember the very first time members of the small CCF group here asked that jobs be made available and means be provided to keep the unemployed from starving. They were told by the then minister of labour—who unfortunately met his untimely death in an airplane accident since then, a fine man—that this could not possibly be done, that to put the unemployed to work would cost \$25 million and would bankrupt the country. Later, whenever proposals for social security measures were put forward, they were fought on the same grounds, that they were not financially possible.

In this case the minister said that the women had not done their homework. Perhaps they have been doing their homework but the minister has not been in the home long enough to do some of his. The minister must know that \$150 is not unreasonable for our senior citizens. Furthermore, unless the minister and his government can find a way of coping with inflation, the demand of these women will be renewed, and I predict that it will not be very long before it is granted, no matter what government is in power. So, I regret that the minister brushed them off in that cavalier way. Had he said that undoubtedly this will come before very long because we are having to consider measures for shoring-up income, that would have been a different story because the minister has been doing that in many fields. I do not like to hear the minister give stereotype answers which go way back to the time of the Ark, when it has been proven time and time again that the demands have been met when they have been strong enough.

There is one thing that I like about the minister's outlook, and that is that he is considering the matter of social

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver Kingsway).]

security, not as a group of unrelated measures but as an interrelated concept. That is what we must have. I wish that my colleagues to my right would stop being so schizophrenic. They make me smile because, first, they start pushing a measure forward, such as old age pensions, the Canada Pension Plan, and so on, and half way through they become frightened and say to themselves that they cannot go on with it because of the effect it will have on the tax rate. Later, they forget and go back to it, saying to themselves that we must have more of these things so that people can live.

Let me suggest to my friends to the right, hon. members in the Progressive Conservative party, that if they could only forget the second half of their name and become a little more progressive they would realize that when you impose a tax you are not throwing money down the drain. When you consider the paying of taxes, you must look at the value of what you get for the taxes you pay. If you get peace of mind and physical comfort for the elderly people, you get something worthwhile. If you get a chance for women to stand on their own feet, economically, politically, socially and emotionally, you get something for which it is worth paying money. If you are getting all these things, it is worth while paying money for them. Just consider that before you become frightened at the idea of what these measures will cost the taxpayers, because so long as the large corporations make the kind of money they are making these days there are some taxpayers who are not paying nearly what they should.

● (1550)

These are the things I wanted to say today, Mr. Speaker. I wish the minister would provide us with a large and pleasant surprise, realizing our inability to move these amendments because of the rules. I wish he would take a sober second look at the Canada Pension Plan and, if he cannot make these changes in this bill, at least tell us that he intends to make them when he gets around to introducing the promised second bill. If they will not fit into that second promised bill, let him tell us they will be incorporated in another bill. Anyway, as long he gets these things done before Christmas nobody will worry. That would be a nice Christmas present this year.

Let me urge on the minister that it is not good enough for the government to go around giving lip service to the rights of women. We have not begun to touch most of the major recommendations in the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The government may not have too long to do this before it plays the death bed scene. It is not a moment too soon for it to begin going through this bible of women's rights and seeing which recommendations can be implemented now. The Canada Pension Plan is an excellent place to start.

[Translation]

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity that is given to us to consider all steps taken by the House of Commons in the field of pensions since the opening of the present session last January.

This form of security has been considered as very important, first in the Speech from the Throne and then in details on January 11 by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), who even dealt in with family