

*British North America Act*

**Mr. Aiken:** May I say, Mr. Speaker, if it had not been unparliamentary, the expression I used would have been much more severe. The term "insincerity" was the least offensive word I could think of using under the circumstances. In fact the hon. member has proven the very point I was trying to make. The government was trying to tell the people of Canada that there were survivorship benefits in this plan when in fact there were no benefits for anyone under the old age criterion of 65 years, and to read that into the bill was not a proper approach.

I do not withdraw my remarks. The government attempted to sell this plan across the country, stating there were survivorship benefits in it. Various people wrote to me saying "You say there are no survivorship benefits and the government says there are. Which is right"? I am merely trying to point out that there were no survivorship benefits, that this was an incomplete plan, and that now we are coming to the truth of the matter.

I want to direct my next remarks to the hon. gentleman from Winnipeg North Centre who sits to my left. I see he is in the house. I would think he also finds himself in a difficult position in this situation, because during the course of the debate on the original plan the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre rose in the house on several occasions—and I have the quotations here—and told those who would listen to him or read his remarks that this was a wonderful plan, that we must get along with it and have it approved. I do not doubt his sincerity in thinking so, but surely he was wrong. He now finds the government has pulled the rug from under him by saying, in effect, "This great plan you were so proud of a couple of months ago really was not any good; we are having to bring in these amendments to the constitution".

**Mr. Knowles:** Would the hon. member permit a question? Would he not like to quote accurately what I said, which was to the effect that I thought the other plans were good but that the new one is better? What is wrong with an improvement?

**Mr. Aiken:** Unfortunately we did not have a statement of that sort at the time. If the hon. member wishes me to quote him, I will quote the concluding sentence of his speech as it appears on page 1186 of *Hansard*, the second paragraph:

As far as the Canada pension plan itself is concerned, the principle is good and it is our responsibility to the Canadian people to try to get it into effect at the earliest possible date.

[Mr. Munro.]

**Mr. Knowles:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Aiken:** I say that the principle was not good. The principle was bad. The principle was to proceed with the Canada pension plan without any survivors or disability benefits. That was a matter of principle.

**Mr. Francis:** The hon. member says there was no provision for survivors benefits. I ask him whether provision was not made for dependant widows, who are of course survivors.

**Mr. Aiken:** If it were so good, what are we doing today?

**Mr. Knowles:** We are improving it. What is wrong with that?

**Mr. Aiken:** I merely say that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre must find himself in an embarrassing position, and I will leave it at that. I think the government has left him holding a big empty bag.

**Mr. Knowles:** May it not be because of the criticisms made from this side of the house that the government was put in the position of having to improve its own legislation?

**Mr. Aiken:** I did not hear any criticism coming from the hon. member. I heard nothing but praise.

Having battered about a little, I should like now to get down to the meat of my speech, because I think there are some serious discrepancies in the plan. I think it is right to say that amendments should have been made in the first place. I believe that we are proceeding now in the right direction. The question I wish to raise is this; whether all the loose ends of the plan can be pulled together to make a cohesive and successful national plan. My fear, and it is a real one, is that with the various new starts, changes and alterations, white papers and bills which are now lying around, these innumerable letters and votes that I tried to pull together myself in my limited way in order to find out whether they had any connection with the Canada pension plan—and I am afraid I was just unable to do so—

**Mr. Munro:** That is obvious.

**Mr. Aiken:** The hon. member for Hamilton East is trying to get his own back. He can make a little speech of his own, perhaps, and I hope it is better than the last one he made.

The first thing I should like to do is to look at the physical condition of the plan, by which I mean the papers.