

Inquiries of the Ministry

the Minister of National Revenue concerning the Canada Pension Plan. Could the minister inform the house whether the farmers and fishermen of this country are called upon to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan out of their gross income or net income?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again it is difficult for the Chair to decide whether this is a matter of urgency.

Mr. Smallwood: Mr. Speaker, this is of great concern to the people of Canada. I went to the department last week. One official tells me that it is based on net income and another fellow tells me it is on gross income. I have come to the conclusion that these people do not know the difference between gross and net income, and I should like to have it made clear for the people of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the minister might say whether he knows.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Revenue and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, we have a very comprehensive booklet explaining exactly how the contributions should be calculated. I shall be very pleased to send my hon. friend a copy of it.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Smallwood: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If the minister and his officials do not know how to interpret their own book, how can the people of Canada know?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I disagree entirely. We know how to interpret what is in it, and I should be pleased to take my hon. friend aside and explain it to him.

Mr. Smallwood: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous. I want someone to tell the people of Canada about this, and the minister does not seem to know about it himself.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Later:]

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, in answer to a question put a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Battle River-Camrose I said I had intended to give him a copy of the information given to the self-employed with respect to the Canada Pension Plan. However, I have not been able to get a French copy, and I would refer him to section 13 of the Canada

[Mr. Smallwood.]

Pension Plan, which makes quite clear that the amount of contribution is determined on the net income exclusive of investment income.

Mr. Smallwood: Would the minister clarify that with his department, because one official told me it was net income and a second one told me it was gross income.

INQUIRY AS TO REFUNDS TO EMPLOYERS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. L. Chatterton (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of National Revenue.

An hon. Member: He has gone to get the book.

Mr. Chatterton: In that case he can take this question as notice. Has the minister found a way of refunding to employers the excess contributions they are making under the Canada Pension Plan?

Mr. J. E. Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): I shall be glad to bring this question to the attention of the minister.

INQUIRIES OF THE MINISTRY

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Prosper Boulanger (Mercier): I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Public Works in his capacity as house leader. Can the hon. minister tell me on how many days the hon. member for Lapointe has sat in the house since being named leader or chairman of the separatist movement?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question of some urgency for the Minister of National Defence. In view of the minister's publicly expressed and commendable interest in urban redevelopment and the building of new cities, is he preparing for an early retirement from the Department of National Defence so that all Canada may benefit?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): No, I was just making plans to prepare a suitable environment for the retirement of my hon. friend.

Mr. Speaker: Order.