

Canada Pension Plan

employed, whether they be farmers or businessmen, will have to make a decision. I know many businessmen who say: I can look after myself; I could use this money to better advantage in my business today. Some of these people will find when they reach retirement age they are not able to make contributions to their retirement. They are not all going to be in the favoured position of the member of the Liberal party who received an old age pension the other day, calculated at about half a million dollars, by being appointed to the other place. Some of these people are going to have to make their own arrangements under this plan. I suggest the plan should have been made universal, and that the government should have arranged for everybody to contribute to the plan.

I notice there is great consternation about this. I believe that it is the right of a farmer to contribute to the plan if he wishes. This is the right of the self-employed. Arrangements can be made whereby they can do so, but it is not compulsory.

There has been considerable discussion, and I think it is worth-while discussion, about whether or not we should have a fully funded plan or the semi-funded plan that we have. I am not really committed to either side because I feel there should have been a great deal more consideration given to the point and more information available to members of parliament about it. I know there are many who say that in 20 years this plan will have \$8 billion in it, and that this is a sizeable amount of money that can be used to advantage in the development of our nation. There are of course those, and I share their view, who say this money should have remained with the federal government, and that the federal government should have used it for the development of new industries. One such development which I hope will come into being in my lifetime is the Grand canal, which it has been indicated will cost about \$2 billion. The indications are that this will be a self-liquidating plan in 50 years. It seems to me this is the type of development that a fully funded plan would have made possible for the federal government. However this money has now been allotted to the provincial governments. I believe this will cause some consternation. There will be provinces that will use it and other provinces that will leave the money with the federal government to invest in federal bonds and other securities.

I am of the opinion that we are not really qualified, as members of parliament, with the

information available, to decide whether or not this should have been a funded plan. I know the minister's department has considered this matter at great length, but I believe that she had to consider it in the light of the discussions that had taken place with the provinces and the fact that the provinces themselves said they would only participate in this type of plan if they were allowed to invest the money that was raised in their own provinces. I feel that our hands were bound before we faced a decision as to whether or not to accept the principle of this bill as a result of the discussions that took place between the federal and provincial governments.

There are many other parts of the bill, Mr. Speaker, upon which I feel the minister is to be congratulated. I am not completely in agreement that they should all have been brought into one bill. I am not sure that the Canada pension plan should not have stood on its own two feet without taking into account all these other things. If I had been the minister I would have kept the pension plan separate and distinct. I would not have referred to it as a social security system but would have called it a Canada pension plan.

However, I am not in disagreement with the additions that have been made. I think the minister is to be congratulated on making provision for survivor benefits in the Canada pension plan. In my opinion this is something that would normally have been included in a straight pension plan. However, in my view supplementary benefits do not really fall within the jurisdiction of what I would consider to be a pension plan. So far as disabled persons, widows, dependants of widows, and widowers in some cases are concerned, we have had joint federal-provincial plans which have been highly unsuccessful. They have provided very limited benefits to people who are totally dependant on such contributions for their very welfare.

I know that the Speaker should have some knowledge of this matter. I deal continually with a member of his family who is responsible for a very large area of this supplementary field at the provincial level and has to do with disabled persons allowances, mothers allowances and so on which are administered by the provincial government. Recently there has been a terrific deterioration in this field. These matters are now back in the provincial office rather than being dealt with regionally, and inasmuch as the law says a person must be totally and permanently disabled the