

all womens' groups have been pressing for this amendment. What does the government do? The government welcomes these women with open arms and, while it folds them to its heart, it says no so far as giving them this equality. This is not good enough. The women of this country want an amendment to the Canada Pension Plan now to provide that, following the death of one spouse the benefit of the Canada Pension Plan will be paid to the surviving spouse and the dependent children on the same basis, regardless of the sex of the surviving spouse. That is what they want. It is perfectly clear.

Not very long ago the Liberal convention made very clear that this is indeed what it wanted. It was the same thing. I shall quote from some information that was sent me following the meeting. They say, for example, in respect of the Canada Pension Plan a man's dollar buys a pension for his widow if she has dependent children or if she is over 25 or if she is disabled. They say further that a woman's dollar buys a pension for her widower only if he is disabled, was disabled at the time of her death and was dependent on her for support prior to her death. For example, a man's orphans get benefits if they can prove relationship; a woman's orphans get benefits if they can prove relationship and if they can prove that there was major financial dependence on her. So, the resolution of the Liberal Party was that the Canada Pension Plan be modified so that the survivors of all contributors receive equal benefits.

That is the first amendment I would ask the minister now to consider bringing to the Canada Pension Plan. We opposition members are precluded from so doing by the rules of this House. In other words, under the Canada Pension Plan when a woman is on the paying end she is equal, but when she is on the receiving end she is second class. Women wish to receive the same benefit in respect of their payment into the Canada Pension Plan that men receive in respect of their payment. I do not think there is any excuse for this being denied any longer.

The second amendment I would like to see is an amendment to make full benefits under the Canada Pension Plan available to the surviving spouse of a contributor who, by reason of illness, injury or death was prevented from making sufficient payments to qualify for a pension under the Canada Pension Plan. All of us in this House have received many letters of distress from people who point out that the payments made by them or their spouse were not sufficient to qualify for pensions under the Canada Pension Plan. In all justice, I believe this situation should be corrected because many people are in a position where benefits are not received automatically in the face of injury, disablement or death. When a man contributes to the Canada Pension Plan, immediately he dies the full benefits go to the widow and the dependent children, but if a woman contributor dies these benefits are not automatic. They go to the estate, and then all those conditions which I earlier laid out are very carefully looked at. This is not right. We must have equality or the pension plan is not fulfilling its purpose.

The third amendment is the one on which I believe we must place the greatest stress. This is the matter which has been dealt with already by a number of members, although they have not all dealt with it in the same way. It

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is in respect of the situation where there is a married couple, one of whom is out earning the bread and contributing to the Canada Pension Plan, while the other is doing the work of the home. But it is only the one person who is covered under the existing legislation. There are members of all parties who now say where there is a married couple and where the housewife, mother or partner is at home, he or she should be entitled to share in the Canada Pension Plan as a contributor and as a full recipient.

● (1540)

There is a difference of opinion as to how that should be done. Yesterday, one hon. member said that the housewife should be able to contribute herself, pay the contributions herself. I ask you: how many housewives with small children at home are in a position to pay their share to the CPP? That is the good old question that used to be asked of our party so often: where will they get the money? I suppose they could go through the old man's pockets if he is unwary enough to leave his money lying around where they can have access to it—if there is anything left, which is another matter. However, I do not think that is a fair position in which to put a woman. She has no money of her own, but why should she have to go to her husband and ask him for enough money to allow her to contribute to the CPP? Women are not of that type any more.

Perhaps there used to be women who just adored getting down on their knees and begging their lords and masters for a few cents with which to buy something they really needed. But that type of woman disappeared a long time ago; she no longer exists. The present day woman wants to stand on her own feet, economically and emotionally. I see the minister shaking his head. Oh, yes, she does. If any of you have the other kind of woman, watch out because she will not stay that way long in the modern world. They are changing very quickly. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) put the matter in the correct perspective, in my view, when he said that marriage is a partnership. Any decent kind of marriage is. When one of the partners is out in the community doing work and the other one is doing work at home, they are none the less both carrying a fair measure of the work of that partnership and both of them should be entitled to share fully in the benefits of social security in all its phases.

There are many people in the minister's department who could very well work out ways and means of achieving that. For example, we could take the joint income of the couple. In some cases the woman has a job; perhaps she has part time work. Let the incomes of both husband and wife be put together, and let them together make a contribution from whatever joint income they have. Let this be considered as a partnership in respect of the CPP. If the woman has no other source of income, heaven knows that she is doing her full share with a group of small children at home, looking after the home, her husband and his needs, and that kind of thing. If that is not satisfactory, why not take another look at my proposal from away back, which is to make available to that woman a salary for the work she is doing in bringing up the future citizens of this country? If she is given a salary, she will be able to pay her own way in CPP and she will have her own money with which to do it.