

Canada Pension Plan

Marsh) has just said that social security numbers are the same throughout the country. Since Quebec authorities have definitely and officially stated they would not participate in the Canada pension plan, how can social security numbers be said to be the same in Quebec as in the rest of Canada?

Since the province of Quebec will have its own pension plan, it is not at all interested in the federal plan of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, that is, the plan now being considered. How can we now be told, therefore, that those numbers will be the same or concurrent throughout Canada, when the province of Quebec will have its own pension plan and will not have to comply with the provisions or requirements of the Canada pension plan?

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry not to be able to answer the hon. member in French—

[Text]

I should like to say, however, that the province of Quebec has indicated that it intends to save money for its residents by using the system which is in existence. The hon. member should realize that this system is not being imposed by this legislation. This legislation was adopted by the house last spring, or almost a year ago, under the aegis of the Department of Labour in respect of the unemployment insurance commission. The numbering system is in effect and 6,500,000 Canadians, including many who reside in the province of Quebec, have social insurance numbers. That numbering system is in existence for the benefit of Canada, including the province of Quebec and any other province, and should any province decide to have its own scheme, that numbering system is available for its use. This has nothing to do with the fact that Quebec will pass its own legislation comparable to the Canada pension plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, should the Quebec government turn to the minister or to the officials of the Department of National Health and Welfare to know, for example, the social security number of Mr. Jean-Pierre Bonneville in Rouyn, or Mr. Jean-Baptiste Côté, in Jonquière, in order to find out who is contributing to the Canada pension plan?

The minister is not specific in her explanations and I want to know in what way it will help the province of Quebec.

Even if I am told that it is to save money, while there is no question here of saving money at all, and considering the fact that the minister herself admits that, within ten years, Canada will benefit from \$5 million collected from contributions across Canada, in what way will money be saved to help the province of Quebec administer its own pension plan, which will be clearly provincial and not national?

[Text]

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, a block of numbers will be made available for Quebec and cards will be issued by the Quebec office for Quebec residents rather than by the Department of National Health and Welfare. The cards will be issued by the Quebec pensions commission, or whatever body exists in respect of the pension scheme. This will ensure that residents of Quebec who take part in the Quebec pension scheme when it comes into operation will be able to move to St. Boniface, for example, and continue to use the same number without having to obtain a new one.

In all fairness, I do not know what names will conflict, but I do not think LaMarsh or Caouette are very common, whereas names such as Leblanc or Baptiste may be as common as Smith, Brown or Jones. There are literally thousands of residents of the country whose first names and surnames are identical, and it is necessary to have this kind of a system in order that an individual who pays in over a lifetime, perhaps 20, 30 or 40 years, will be able to reap the benefits.

My colleague suggests that Smith is not a very French-sounding name, but as a matter of interest I am informed that there are some 50,000 Smiths alone on the unemployment insurance commission master index and, of these, well over 10,000 have the initial "J". It will be appreciated, therefore, that this numbering system is designed for the benefit of the individual so that his or her pension benefit will not be lost in the future, and so that the hon. member for Villeneuve, the hon. member for Perth, an Eskimo in the north, a fisherman out west or a lumberman in the east, or vice versa, cannot be confused with someone else, notwithstanding the fact that that individual may have been born in the same month of the same year and with an identical name.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, even though the minister is a very charming lady, I must confess that her explanations do not satisfy