

Private Members' Business

The other side is, as I said to the hon. member, that the minister has promised he would take his concerns and review them at the spring meeting with his counterparts from the provinces with regard to the period for disabled period and would address the need.

In conclusion and before we come to any vote I want all of us to be aware that we stand a chance of losing it completely. If we do get it, it cannot be implemented until January 1, 1994. I agree with this bill in principle. I know the minister will take this concern to his colleagues and we could get it through this House in the year 1992 and have it enacted at least a year earlier.

• (1740)

While we all agree in principle with what the member has stated I think we have to weigh the pros and cons very carefully. The minister did give his word to the member and maybe that is the route we should take. It is going to be up to each and every one of us here to decide exactly how to treat this bill.

Mr. Parker: Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that there would not be a vote. I thought the motion had passed, it was agreed upon and the motion was accepted by the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I remind all members that the motion was carried by unanimous consent. Mr. Redway moved that:

Notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-280, an act to amend the Canada Pension Plan, be referred at second reading to a Committee of the Whole instead of the legislative committee and that, unless otherwise disposed of no later than at the end of the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business today, any proceeding then before the House shall be interrupted and every question necessary to dispose of the said bill at all stages shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

That is the motion that the House carried by unanimous consent earlier this afternoon.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address this particular initiative by my colleague for Don Valley East, which I find extremely laudable.

Removing the deadline for the applications for disability pensions I think is something that should have occurred a long time ago. Let us remember that these are people who have suffered. Very often there is an accident involved or another serious setback. I cannot

understand at all why one would not simply concede immediately that anyone who has gone through that kind of trauma should have to adhere to a particular deadline. There are situations in which people are left alone without appropriate support, or they are particularly and totally consumed by what has occurred to them that it is simply not possible for them to know the rules and regulations or to be informed of those rules and regulations.

I think this is an absolutely meaningful and progressive initiative.

[*Translation*]

I fully applaud it. I also wish we could look at other opportunities for responding to the needs of Canadian men and women, as this bill will do if it is allowed to proceed.

[*English*]

I would hope as well that during the process of debate today and at other appropriate times we might look to see where we could extend deadlines and look at retroactivity. I think the same principle is involved here: Should a Canadian be penalized because he or she who qualified for a particular government program did not apply at a particular time?

What are the reasons? Very often they do not know that it exists or they are particularly taken by the situation they are involved in that they do not have the time or the information or have no way of finding out and so on.

Let me give just three very brief incidents that I have experienced since becoming a member of Parliament just a little longer than three years ago. There is a disabled person in my constituency who did not know that as a result of an accident he could qualify. This was not a person who was illiterate. This was a person you would find every day in your constituency as you meet the men and women who are there. One day, because of a discussion he had with a member of the family, he thought there might be a possibility and because it was brought to his attention too late after the accident he no longer qualified. I think this was a tremendous injustice.

There is another incident in which I believe a person should qualify for disability.

Because of serious emotional problems this person is unable to function adequately. We ought to be looking at that dimension as well, at the definition of what a severe