

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

Health and Welfare. Is the minister yet in a position to give us further information on when we can expect to receive copies of the white paper on the national pension plan?

**Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Yes. I am sure all hon. members in the house will be happy to know they will receive it before the summer recess.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Actually, Mr. Speaker, my question was almost a carbon copy of the question just asked by the hon. member for Middlesex West, only I was going to put it to the Secretary of State for External Affairs as a supplementary to the question he answered on July 14. On that occasion the minister indicated the white paper was just about ready and it seemed to be merely a matter of waiting for the Prime Minister to get back. Could we not have the assurance that this white paper will be tabled soon?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** I think the Minister of National Health and Welfare and I have given the kind of assurance which is requested.

**An hon. Member:** Not at all.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** When I say that, I hope the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, for whom I have the greatest regard, will not complicate a very simple question. There will be no delay in this matter.

**Mr. Knowles:** I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The statement made by the minister now is precisely what he said on July 14, that there would not be too long a delay.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** That is right.

**Mr. Knowles:** How does the government square that with the suggestion that we will get it some time before the recess, which might be months away?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I hope the summer recess will not be too long delayed either.

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam):** The minister asked me not to complicate what is a very simple matter, but it is the government that is complicating the matter by suggesting that a very important document will be brought down at a very indefinite date. The Minister of National Health and Welfare says before the summer recess, and this could be a month away or it could be six months away. Can we not get something more specific in the way of a date, say one

week, two weeks or something specific as to when it will be brought down?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** The Prime Minister has just returned, and naturally there are certain matters that one refers to the head of a government. I want to assure my hon. friend it will not be too long.

[Later:]

**Mr. W. H. A. Thomas (Middlesex West):** I should like to reword my question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare in view of the answer we got. I hold in my hand a clipping taken from this morning's *Globe and Mail*. The article is entitled: "Pension Still Available If Wife Kills Husband". It seems to me that this is rather dangerous information to be circulated throughout the country. In view of the fact that the article states that these provisions of the Canada pension plan were confirmed by a health department official, and since it goes on to say that—

—in the case of a woman having murdered her husband—assuming she is not executed for the crime—she can receive his pension either out of jail or in jail under the proposed legislation—

—my question is this: Does not the minister think it would be much wiser to make this white paper available rather than have such dangerous rumours circulating in the country?

**Miss LaMarsh:** I did notice the clipping to which the hon. member referred and it is contrary to my understanding of what the general law of Canada says about unjust enrichment. Normally, one cannot obtain a benefit through causing the death of someone else. However, it may be the reporter had been talking to someone from the health branch, as he indicated, whereas the pension plan is to be administered by the welfare branch. That may account for it.

I know hon. members are concerned to know when the white paper will be provided and I think they may be interested to learn that there is a meeting next week of the representatives of all the provinces to consider this question. It is for this reason that the document has not been produced up to this moment. Since hon. members opposite have shown such good temper in the past few days and such a disposition, after so many months, to get down to work, it seems to me that using the words "before the time the house rises for the summer" in my answer was in accord with what had been said by the Acting Prime Minister. There was no attempt to mislead or confuse members of the house.