

*Government Orders*

Members from all sides of the House do know that there is an urgency to this particular bill and really have shown truly excellent co-operation ensuring that it could move forward to the other place and then on to have provincial approval and come into effect January 1992.

First, I wish to thank the member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve who chaired the legislative committee. I also want to thank the hon. members for Winnipeg North and Kootenay East.

• (1540 )

I would like to extend my appreciation to all those who brought forward their concerns, especially those with respect to the disabled. In this regard, note should be taken of the contributions of the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia and also of the hon. member for Don Valley East, whose proposed amendment to the disability provision of the CPP is contained in Bill C-280, which received third reading here on Tuesday evening.

I would also like to note the particular concerns raised in the committee by members regarding the CPP, the definition of "disability", the time limits on applying for a disability pension, and the protection for persons who stay at home to care for disabled persons.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all the witnesses representing the disabled community who appeared before the committee. A brief on Bill C-39 was presented by the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped, the Canadian Disability Rights Council and the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped. They raised many important issues and they revealed the serious concerns many persons have about the disability provisions under the CPP.

It was also noted that some Canadians simply lacked the information or the knowledge about the plan's provisions. Because of this an application for disability benefits may be delayed too long and unfortunately this may result in the loss of eligibility for the benefits.

I might add that the Department of National Health and Welfare has undertaken a stronger communications effort in this particular area. However it really is clear to me and to all of those who sat on the legislative committee that more has to be done. I really welcome all suggestions from the members here in the House and all

members of Parliament as to how we might better inform Canadians about the CPP plan and its provisions.

Certain amendments designed to improve the disability provisions under the CPP had been made through Bill C-116, which took effect in 1987. The changes enhance the flat rate disability benefit as well as ease the eligibility rules by including a new recency provision. Bill C-39 also includes important provisions for the disabled. Greater benefits will be paid to the children of disabled contributors, and the benefit eligibility of CPP contributors who were unable to apply in time because of incapacity is going to be protected through one of our amendments.

It is clear that hon. members want more. Bill C-280, which I have mentioned, is a private member's bill and it was sponsored by the hon. member for Don Valley East. The bill was passed in this House Tuesday and now is in the other place for discussion.

This bill would further ease the contributory requirements for a disability pension. Under the provisions of the CPP, the terms of that bill will require notice to, and approval by, the provinces.

I also wish to indicate my appreciation to the witnesses from the Canadian Institute of Actuaries who appeared before the legislative committee. Their testimony confirmed that CPP is funded on the basis of sound actuarial principles and that this legislation here before us today is solidly based on those principles.

I would like to now briefly summarize the major and the important minor provisions contained in this bill.

As members know, the bill contains two major amendments. It amends the current 25-year schedule of CPP contribution rates and extends the schedule by an additional five years.

The bill increases benefits for the children of disabled and deceased CPP contributors by \$35 a month.

The bill contains a number of minor amendments which are really insignificant in cost, but the minor amendments would provide for the conversion from a CPP disability contributor's child benefit to a CPP orphan's benefit without the need for application. It would provide CPP children's benefits to a child who comes under the care and custody of a CPP contributor after the contributor becomes disabled.