

Canada Pension Plan

Through the pension plan we are assuring, for people now working, a continuing income when their earnings cease. It will be available if they are disabled. It will be available to their dependants if they die. The rights to this security, once earned by contributions, will never be lost. There will be 100 per cent portability across our country and benefit rights will be kept in line with improvements in earnings levels and protected against the effects of changes in prices.

This is not a complete social measure; it will be followed, if this government is able to complete its program, by other measures which will continue its straightforward social advance.

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could tell us how much longer she proposes to go on, because I should like to call it one o'clock.

Miss LaMarsh: I have two half pages.

Mr. Lambert: One o'clock, because the speech has gone beyond the relevancy of the resolution by a long way.

Miss LaMarsh: I was about to pay tribute to certain people who are not in this chamber.

Mr. MacInnis: We will agree to sit if you pay tribute to those who are in the chamber.

Miss LaMarsh: I was going to do that, too.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Chairman, I must again thank the committee for letting me take a couple of minutes to finish the remarks I wish to make. Just before the luncheon break I was saying that the Canada pension plan, which is part of Bill C-136, together with part IV, the amendments to the Old Age Security Act, have been put together with a great deal of difficulty, and surely this is not so surprising.

There has been a great deal of public discussion with respect to the Canada pension plan, but in our federal system the plan could only have been possible after a long process of consultation and negotiation with the provinces. I would like very sincerely to pay a tribute to the co-operation of all ten provinces which, in greater or lesser degree, have had a great deal to do in formulating

the present plan. I regret it is never possible to comply with all the differing requests of different premiers at the same time, but I wish especially to mention the governments of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec because those two provinces, with the largest populations, are naturally the two which have gone furthest in studying pensions and developing their own ideas about them.

It is no secret that there have been some difficulties in the past and, inevitably, mistakes made on both sides, but we have been successful in evolving a pension system which will be essentially the same for people in Canada wherever they may move, and we have done that while preserving the right of any province, now or in the future, to pass its own pension legislation and operate a plan itself.

This great measure of social security for Canadians has been made possible by the Canadian spirit of the premiers of all the provinces, and I should like to pay my tribute to that spirit. Perhaps I will be forgiven if, before concluding, I also take this opportunity to pay my tribute to the Prime Minister of Canada. Without his openminded co-operation, his judicial sense of balance for the good of all the people of Canada, his patience with all points of view, including my own, the Canada pension plan might well have foundered long ago.

It is no secret that there have been diverse views over this legislation in the past two years, but the Prime Minister's spirit of reasonableness, of moderation and friendly persuasion, and of co-operation, has prevailed so that every member of this committee may pride himself or herself on being part of the group which brings to the Canadian people social legislation of great benefit, which will lead only to unity and the future security of Canadians everywhere.

If I may add one more thing it is that at times during the 14 days we have spent dealing with this legislation, it may have been that my own temper has not been what it might always have been. But perhaps members of the committee will forgive me if this once I take refuge behind my skirt and say I often see myself in a maternal role as mother of this, my baby, although I do not suggest that I more than any other am responsible for all of its characteristics. However, like a mother I am fiercely jealous of my progeny and I do not like people to call it misshapen, or warped, or anything but as beautiful as it appears to me. And I hope therefore all members of the committee will