

tion, many of the people in this particular group of which I am speaking, can look forward to is the hope of getting an old age pension. Many of them are worn out before they reach the age of seventy.

I want to make an appeal at this time to have a better Old Age Pensions Act placed upon our statute books. This legislation should start at a younger age and should provide more comforts. By all means let all pensioners have the small sum referred to as a cost of living bonus. The difficulties in getting accommodation and renting quarters are real in most of our towns and cities. The prices of the commodities that these people have to buy have gone up. According to a return brought down last year, in 1942 the dominion contributed \$20,611,706 for old age pensions. If the pension is increased to \$25 a month, it will mean an increase of \$7,402,000. If the pensions are paid at sixty-five years of age, the additional cost will be \$19,603,000.

There is one other thing which is proving a great difficulty to old age pensioners. The total amount allowed is \$365 a year. The maximum pension is \$240, and if the pensioner makes more than \$125 a year, the pension is reduced accordingly. In these times this means a hardship to a great many of these deserving pioneers.

The people of this country realize that we are at war and are anxious to make their contribution. Go into the rural districts and you will find that men are willing to give their time in the collecting of scrap iron which may be of use, and the women are spending long hours in sewing and doing Red Cross work. Even the children are bringing in their pennies as a contribution. They are unable to buy war bonds, but they are anxious to do what they can in this regard. I have two suggestions to make which I think are of importance. One is that the local officers of the wartime prices and trade board should have a little more authority and the privilege of making more decisions, because it is often difficult and takes a good deal of time to locate the man who can settle the difficulties that are constantly arising. Although the central office must have control, this system works to the disadvantage of many people because of the difficulty and the time it takes to get in touch with the different officers and secure a decision.

One other suggestion I have to make is that local draft boards be given some voice in granting postponements for military service. Conditions differ very much in different localities. In an irrigation district, for instance, a farmer must have a large staff both summer and winter, doing irrigation work in the sum-

mer and stock feeding in the winter. When the younger men are called into the army and the older men go into munition plants the owner of the farm is in a desperate situation. It is believed that stock feeding has dropped as much as forty per cent in some of these districts because of the impossibility of getting help. The returns are not sufficient to allow the farmer to pay enough wages to attract the help he requires, and if he could the help is not available.

There is another matter which I wish to bring to the attention of the house. A young man—I know of an actual case—enlisted; he was anxious to do his part. After he had gone, his father was taken permanently sick. No one else was available who could carry on the work. Many efforts have been made and much correspondence has taken place, but that young man has not yet received any extended postponement. In the meantime the life savings of this aged couple are rapidly disappearing. It is cases like this which would seem to make it advisable to give men who are acquainted with the local situation some say in granting postponements.

We in the west feel that we are fortunate in having a Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) and a Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. MacKinnon) who understand western conditions. We realize that they have obtained for the western farmer as much as any one in their positions could possibly obtain. Millions of dollars have been allotted from the treasury to pay for wheat for which there is no market, and bonuses of various kinds have been granted up to an amount of sixty-five million dollars or even more. All these things are much appreciated by the farmers of that western country, although they do find in connection with the bonuses that there are many discouragements and delays and that often the regulations are such that deserving people are denied the bonus.

I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture one particular phase of this subject. This year there is no prairie farm assistance provided, and yet in southern Alberta we have twenty-two townships where the average yield is much below eight bushels per acre. These people are in a desperate situation, and I hope that arrangements can be made whereby the prairie farm assistance payments can be made to these deserving people. I am not asking for a parity price. I am asking the department and appealing to this house to find out the cost of producing the various farm products and to pay that cost, as it fairly should be paid. The health of the people of the nation demands these agricultural