

made by my right hon. friend that old age pensions would be paid in full by the federal government. We come now to a time of economic stress and strain and my right hon. friend feels he can get off with a contribution of another 25 per cent. He makes no apology, no explanation, gives no idea whatever as to when the balance of that pledge is to be fulfilled. I want to compare that laconic sentence in his speech with the following letter that I hold in my hand:

Bennett's Pledge On Old Age Pensions  
Conservative Federal Headquarters  
Victoria Building  
140 Wellington Street

Redmond Code,  
General Secretary.

Ottawa, Canada,  
July 12, 1930.

To the people of Nova Scotia:

At Winnipeg I pledged the Conservative party to put into effect a National Old Age Pension Act. This pledge I have confirmed in every province in Canada. During my recent trip throughout the maritimes I have dealt with it at length.

Let me say again, that it was pointed out to Mr. King when the present old age pension bill was passed that the maritime provinces, owing to the financial obligation which it would entail, would not be able to adopt the measure. Yet the Liberal government put it into effect. With what result?

While the old people of your province were unable to benefit by the present act during the last two years, nevertheless through the contribution of one-half of the pension money from the federal treasury you have been contributing your share of the pension money going to the old people in other provinces. This situation cannot continue.

Mr. King says that in order to adopt a national old age pension bill, we will have to amend the British North America Act as it is now unconstitutional for the federal government to pass such a bill. I contend that if the dominion government can contribute 50 per cent as they do at present, they can contribute it all.

If returned to power on the 28th of this month, I pledge my party to pass a national old age pension bill by which the federal treasury will provide all the money required—thus treating all the old people alike, whether they live in the maritimes or in any other part of Canada.

Faithfully yours,

R. B. Bennett,  
Leader, Liberal-Conservative Party.

Now I want to say to my hon. friend that the old people in Nova Scotia did not take that announcement with exactly the levity some of my hon. friends on the other side have shown. They took the right hon. gentleman at his word. We have now only a half implementation of that promise, and no one knows whether or not the province of Nova

Scotia will accept it. However, hundreds of people were induced to vote for candidates of my right hon. friend because of that letter, which they considered a personal pledge from a man who would not break his word and who would give them old age pensions, not next year or the year following, but immediately, as soon as he came into power.

Mr. BENNETT: It does not say that.

Mr. GUTHRIE: It will be done.

Mr. RALSTON: I say to my hon. friend that any people reading that letter would not take legal advice with respect to it; they would have no other idea but that the old age pension bill would be passed just as soon as the Conservative party came into power. If I mistake not, my hon. friend the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rhodes) made a statement that he would resign, I think within three months, if the old age pension bill were not brought in.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Resign.

Mr. RHODES: Mr. Speaker, I am sure my hon. friend would be the last to wish to do me an injustice in connection with any statement I made. I made no such statement.

Mr. DUFF: The Minister of Fisheries said ninety-nine per cent, not one hundred per cent.

Mr. RALSTON: I merely state that, Mr. Speaker, in order to indicate what I said a moment ago, that the old people of the province of Nova Scotia were entitled at least to take from that letter that an old age pension bill providing for the payment of one hundred per cent of the cost would be brought in at the very first opportunity. I notice my hon. friend the Minister of Fisheries does not deny the soft impeachment that he mentioned ninety-nine per cent instead of one hundred per cent.

Mr. RHODES: Mr. Speaker, the same statement I have made with regard to the first statement of my hon. friend holds good with respect to the statement made by the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough. I did not rise to say so because I did not wish to interrupt my hon. friend in his speech.

Mr. DUFF: Under the rules of the house I must accept that statement. If it had been made down by the Rideau club, I would say my hon. friend was not telling the truth.

Mr. RALSTON: I say, Mr. Speaker, that a pledge of that kind, half implemented, is one of the reasons why my hon. friend to-day has