

tories, our coal mines and our steel works, the labour unions have done a great deal to alleviate suffering in this way, by establishing relief funds, to which some of our local governments have contributed, by means of which a man gets from \$4 to \$6 a week if he is incapacitated for working, provided he has himself contributed a certain amount per month to the relief fund. A great number of the relief societies, however, are beneficial only to the working people when these people are themselves able to work and have not ceased to work. None of these relief societies have as yet arrived at a stage where they could provide for the aged poor without the latter contributing to the fund. That is one of the reasons urged against state aid.

The hon. Minister of Finance, who, I believe is taking a keen interest in this subject, as I think every public man should, has said that in some parts of this country to-day there is no necessity for any state aid. I agree with the hon. minister so far as the agricultural districts of Canada are concerned, which, I presume, contain 60 per cent of the population of this country. So far as the agriculturists of Canada are concerned, we need not worry ourselves about state aid, because from the time they enter on the farm they are putting themselves in a position to look after their own old age, and their occupation is well calculated to enable them to do so. But what about the 20 or 30 per cent of the people of this country who are artisans and labourers? What about the men who work in factories for from \$1.50 to \$2 a day? What about the men who work in mines, some of whom make high wages, while others get wages on which no man in this country should be asked to live, \$1.50 or \$1.65 a day? How is it possible for people in this condition to live and bring up a family, taking into consideration the very high cost of living in this country to-day? It is absolutely impossible for them to lay by anything for the comforts of their old age. These are the people we must consider. It would not require very much from the treasury of Canada to maintain and keep in good working order an old age pension system such as I have outlined, and I am happy that the present Minister of Finance is interested in the question. In the eastern section of Nova Scotia, which is an industrial section, we have our steel works and our coal works, and the question of old age pensions is a living and burning question in that vicinity at the present time. I understand also that in the coal regions of the west and in the industrial centres of Quebec and Ontario public

Mr. CARROLL.

opinion is being developed on this question; and while the percentage of people in Canada to-day who would be looking for state aid is happily small, yet it is sufficient to make it desirable that this government should take into consideration and formulate some scheme by which the old age of these people may be made more comfortable and happy.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. Speaker, some years ago, when I was Minister of Labour, this question was brought before the House and a committee was appointed to study the working of the old age pension system. Unfortunately it was at the end of a long and strenuous session, and the committee did not do very much work. It met only once and was never convened again.

I hope that this time a strong committee will be struck and that we will gather as much information as possible on this very important question. Much valuable information can be collected now that we have the results of their experience in England of the working of the Old Age Pension system. I may say, en passant, that this debate has been the means of vindicating the policy of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer which has been so much abused on the other side of the Atlantic. Every one remembers that when Mr. Lloyd George brought that question to the fore in the House of Commons in England he was severely criticised, but to-day after a few years' experience, every one admits that his old age pension has been quite a success, and it is now adopted as part and parcel of the British system.

I agree with the Minister of Finance that while the old age pension may be a necessity for England, it does not follow that it is a necessity for Canada. I am bound to say that in England there are not only the unemployed but the unemployable. I heard that expression used some years ago by the great labour leader, John Burns. He said that the question which concerns England to-day is not so much the army of unemployed, as the army of unemployable. Fortunately for Canada, we have not the unemployable, and we have very few unemployed. There is no pauperism in Canada. I would not wish to import politics into this debate but since 1896 at least, we have seen no evidence of pauperism in Canada, and my hope is that under the able guidance of the Minister of Finance (Mr. White) there will never be pauperism in Canada.

Whilst this committee would gather very valuable information and would educate the country on that very important question, there is one which, in my judgment, is of more importance still, a subject that was mentioned the other day by the Min-