

respect to that was placed before the social security committee by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

I should like to draw attention to an investigation made by the commissioner of public welfare in the city of Toronto into old age pensions. After the most careful study the commissioner came to the conclusion that the pension for a person living as part of a family should be increased by approximately \$3.50 a month and for a person living alone by \$9.25 a month. I want the committee to note what the pension will buy in the essentials of life. These purchases have been carefully worked out. For a person living as one of a family, food is computed at \$9.27 a month, and for a person living alone, at \$10.40 a month; clothing for women is computed at \$1.92 and for men at \$2.53 a month; shelter, including heat and services, is computed for a person living with a family at \$8 a month, and for a person living alone at \$12 a month. Incidentals are computed at \$4.33 a month for a person living with a family and for a person living alone. There is very little for anything except the bare necessities of life, and a man cannot live on the bare necessities of life. He has to have those bare necessities to live at all, but on the present amount of the old age pension he is not living; he is just existing. I am sorry indeed that the government has not seen fit to increase the old age pension to an amount that would give the pensioner at least one dollar for every day in the year.

Mr. NEILL: I assure the minister that my remarks will be as extemporaneous as his own, if that has any merit. My notes are here, but in very scattered form.

I do not believe the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard could have introduced a more popular subject in the country or introduced it at a more unpopular time and place. I do not blame him for that. He had difficulties which were not of his own making.

I am not going to say anything to-night with respect to the argument for increasing old age pensions, because it has been repeated so often by so many people in the house and the hour is so late. Everyone knows my sentiments and they are almost unanimous, so that I shall not enlarge on the reasons to-night why we should give a greater measure of support generally to aged people along these lines.

I wish to deal for a moment with the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver East. He said he was going to delve into history.

Mr. MacINNIS: No; I said that the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard had delved into history.

[Mr. MacInnis.]

Mr. NEILL: Oh, did he? Well, I hope the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard was more successful in his delving into history than was the hon. member for Vancouver East, because that hon. member's recollection of history is entirely different from mine, and I happened to have been there. He was not in the house for some years, four at least after the Old Age Pensions Act was passed, and I was at the initiation of it—"in the beginning", like when we started from initial things and built up the universe. My recollection of it is that there were four members of the house elected on a more or less independent ticket. There was Mr. Woodsworth, who at that time called himself a labour man. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation have gone through the country and are going through the country to-night, and will continue to do it, in years to come, taking the whole credit to their party for having passed the old age pension, or, if not passing it, being the means of passing it, but they were not in existence until seven years after it was passed. Where, then, does the glory fall on their shoulders?

Mr. Woodsworth was elected as, I think he called himself, a member of the Manitoba labour party. Mr. Heaps, who was also a member at that time, was a labour representative of some sort, and Mr. Heenan, of Ontario, represented independent labour or something of that kind, and I myself had been elected as an independent. The four of us got together. The government had a very small majority; we thought we would play politics, as is the manner of people when they want something, and we approached the government and asked what the chances would be of passing old age pension legislation. We also applied, by the way, to the then leader of the opposition, the Hon. Arthur Meighen, who turned us down flat. But we had more favourable support and encouragement from the government of the day, and we discussed the pros and cons, and whether we would give the Liberals support on a vote of want of confidence, for instance, at the first session if they passed old age pensions. I have no hesitation at all in saying—and Mr. Heaps would support me on this if he were here—that the man we had the difficulty with was Mr. Woodsworth himself. Mr. Woodsworth, we all know, has gone, and God forbid I should say a word against him. I admired him very much. He was an idealist; he lived in the clouds, beautiful clouds, the product of a beautiful imagination, but he was not practical. The attitude he took was this: we will have no part or lot with the sons of—Belial. We will stay on the side-lines, and if the government chooses to bring down an old age pension bill and we like the look of it