

raising Canada's total old age pension costs to \$206,000,000. It seems to me now that I should apologize to the old people of this country for having suggested so small an amount, for we have found since that for other worthy and deserving purposes we have been able to find almost unlimited sums of money. It seems to me that if we can go in, as I am confident we can, for social legislation such as has been brought down in the house lately—I refer particularly to the bill providing for family allowances and to the bill providing for gratuities for service personnel—if we feel that money is no barrier to bringing about these two desirable objectives because we have found during the war that we can increase our production tremendously, I feel keenly that the time has come not to make just piecemeal changes in our old age pension legislation but to put it on a really proper basis. I know the minister will possibly remind me that during a previous debate the suggestion was made that this whole matter would be discussed at the dominion-provincial conference whenever it may be held. I would hope that if that is still the answer the minister would indicate whether the government has any proposals along the line of increasing the amount of the old age pension and lowering the eligible age to present to that conference if and when it is held. I should also be glad if he would indicate whether any further announcement is to be made as a result of the study by the officials of the old age pension branch which he promised on the 5th of June.

Mr. ILSLEY: This whole matter was discussed when the old age pension war estimate was before the house. With regard to the question whether the government has any proposals for increasing the amount and lowering the age, we certainly intend to make proposals to that end in so far as a contributory system of old age pensions is concerned, which we shall have to discuss with the provinces because that would involve a constitutional change.

With regard to the present system I explained clearly that it is not a satisfactory system. It is almost impossible to make any fundamental change in the system until we discuss a contributory old age pension system with the provinces, and we cannot do that until we have a dominion-provincial conference.

With regard to the suggestions that were made when the estimates were before the house previously, I have had a very long and carefully prepared memorandum made about

all of these suggestions. It has been found impossible to do anything about them yet. We have not taken them up with the provinces. That involves an immense amount of correspondence, telegraphing and so on. I think myself that the conference is the most appropriate way in which to deal with the suggestions.

Mr. KNOWLES: I wonder if the minister is planning to provide copies of that memorandum to the provincial governments in advance of the conference so that they may study the suggestions contained in it.

Mr. ILSLEY: It is a memorandum for the minister from the officials. It is not for general circulation, but perhaps with some modifications it could be.

Mr. KNOWLES: It seems to me that would be highly desirable.

Mr. ILSLEY: It is a very good memorandum indeed.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Did I understand the minister to say that the present system was not satisfactory?

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes, I said that before.

Mr. BLACKMORE: And it was not satisfactory because it was noncontributory?

Mr. ILSLEY: I said before that it was not satisfactory because of divided jurisdictions, because of the great difficulty in making changes and bringing about agreement in ten different jurisdictions when anything has to be done. I have had a very large amount of correspondence with the provinces during the last few years over changes in the old age pension regulations, and I think that a system where the jurisdiction is divided is unsatisfactory.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Did I understand the minister to say that the ideal system would involve contributions?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I move that the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again this day, so that I may move to continue after eleven o'clock.

Progress reported.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, I move that the house be not adjourned at eleven o'clock to-day.

Motion agreed to.