

can give the committee some information on this question. I will not go into the subject of old age pensions, but I think everyone agrees that we must revise the entire act and bring it up to date in the light of present-day conditions so as to afford a decent standard of living and to enable our aged citizens to carry on. Can the minister give any information as to the attitude of the provinces?

Mr. McCANN: The question which the hon. gentleman asks has reference to the dominion-provincial agreements as far as they affect social legislation, more particularly old age pensions. The proposals put forward have not dealt with that particular phase, but I am taking note of the questions asked by the hon. gentleman and they will be brought to the attention of the department.

Mr. MENARY: I wish to say a few words in this debate on estimates, and I trust that what I have to say will be constructive and to the benefit of all our people in this great dominion. I desire to speak on annuities at the age of sixty. What I shall say will not take up much time but I believe that this subject merits our earnest consideration. As we all know, Canada has enjoyed great prosperity. When we look back and recall the amazing sums raised in the various war loans; when we remember the interest rates on these loans and note the steady increase in the price of these bonds, we say to ourselves, this truly is a new era. Yes, truly it is a new era, but perhaps not for all. It is not for the people who had retired, say, ten or fifteen years ago, or immediately prior to the war. To-day, if you wished to retire and had invested \$100,000 in government bonds for the past five years, your annual income would be only \$3,000. We will say that you live in Ottawa or Toronto, or in any other city where homes are scarce. If you wish to rent one you will want a home such as, I presume, a person of this wealth is accustomed to. Such a home would cost, I imagine, \$100 a month or more. If you try to live in your former style and if you have dependents, the upkeep of a car, medical and ordinary living expenses, et cetera, may make it difficult to live on this interest. Your net income, if you are single, after taxes would be \$2,024.75; if married, \$2,250.

Now let us compare this man to a farmer, who has retired possibly at the age of sixty, because he has a boy at home who wishes to get married and start out in life for himself. We will say this farmer owns his farm and has \$10,000 invested in bonds. The son

agrees to pay the father \$5,000 for the farm at an interest rate of three per cent. That will give the father an income of \$450, but the taxes on his new home in town will probably be \$75, his hydro, water rates and insurance on the house, at the very least \$25. This man will have \$350 to live on, buy coal, milk, food and clothes. He will contribute to his church. I ask this committee, can this man live on this income?

Then we come to the working man, say a white-collared one. We will say he has earned from \$2,500 to \$3,000, has lived in the city during the war, and has raised a family of three and tried to educate them. His savings would be small and he must still struggle to live. In the smaller town where there is usually a garden and rents are much lower, we drop into a lower scale, but here we ever have the increasing cost of living pressing heavily on his shoulders, as on the shoulders of all our citizens and especially on the people in the low-income brackets.

Then take the worker in a factory, or a store, a road builder, a street-car conductor, or any other worker with an average income. Take anyone working in a store or an office. When these people have raised their families and saved what is left for old age, and the time is approaching when they must retire, I ask, will they have sufficient to care for themselves after the age of sixty?

I have had some sorrowful letters from men on old age pensions in my riding. One case is that of a man of seventy years of age; his wife is sixty. How can this man live on \$25 a month with the laws now framed so that under the means test he can earn only \$100 a year? Even at that, his income would only be \$400. I have another case where the husband is on the old age pension and his wife, who, I would say, is aged about sixty, is not eligible. This couple cultivated a garden and sold a few vegetables. The wife helped out by doing housework, washing and so forth. The husband, who was formerly a carpenter, filed a few saws. He could not do much of this work because he lived in a very small village. However, this became known to the inspector and deductions were made from the pension which this man receives. Consequently, this couple were without any income from December to February the following year, when representation was made to the pension board, who agreed to deduct the amount due by this pensioner in payments of \$5 a month. Here is another case where the government penalizes thrift. I investigated these cases and know they are true.