

themselves should receive some assistance from the state. Hon. gentlemen opposite say we are wrong and that we should go first to the provinces and consult them. I think we dealt with that matter very fully last year; this problem is one which under our constitution rests primarily upon the provinces, and they in their turn have handed that responsibility to the municipalities. I think it will be conceded by every hon. member of this House that those who have reached the advanced age of seventy, and through circumstances in many cases beyond their control find themselves without means, should be supported, and that the state should contribute to that support. What is the state as far as Canada is concerned? This country consists of nine provinces and the taxes are collected from the people residing in all nine provinces which go to make up this Dominion. If we keep to our constitution we must consider this as a provincial problem, but the government of which Mr. Mackenzie King is the leader considered this proposal to be of such importance that uniformity of legislation throughout Canada should be brought about. And how is that to be done? We cannot pass legislation telling the provinces that they must do so and so in this matter, but recognizing the fact that they are entitled to bear a proper share of this work we can say to the provinces that we, as the central parliament of Canada, will contribute from our resources fifty per cent of the cost of taking care of these people. I hear from the representatives of Nova Scotia and British Columbia that those provinces cannot undertake this burden, but is it not understood in this House and throughout the country that the aged are entitled to receive and are supposedly receiving support to-day? So those who say that this is not a proper bill and that the Dominion should assume full responsibility are entirely outside of their premises as Dominion legislators.

We have not followed a new practice; it has already been cited in this House that the governments of Sir Robert Borden and Right Hon. Arthur Meighen brought in proposals without consultation with the provinces, whereby contributions were made from the Dominion treasury in order to bring about better road construction in Canada, better technical education and better agricultural conditions. Were these offers refused by the provinces? In every case the provinces did exactly what any individual would do; they accepted the gift from the Dominion government and utilized these funds. The bill brought down in regard to good roads provided that the Dominion government would

contribute 40 per cent of the cost of construction of the main highways, not 50 per cent. I was a provincial minister at that time; that gift from the Dominion government involved the province in a very large expenditure, and there was hesitation on the part of the various provincial governments as to whether or not they should accept. They did accept, however, because it was a gift from the central treasury of Canada. I want to make this point clear. My friends argue that the Dominion should accept the whole shot and that the provinces should be relieved of that burden. Is that a fair consideration if you look into it carefully? Who can better judge the condition of these people whom it is proposed to help than the local authorities? That is one reason why the Dominion government, even if they had an overflowing treasury, should insist that the provincial governments share in this responsibility. In addition to that we will have the advantage of the local machinery which exists in practically every province in Canada to-day, through which these conditions may be investigated and the truth made known.

As I said a moment ago, last year was the first time any government in this country was prepared to bring legislation of this kind into the federal House. In dealing with expenditures involving \$12,000,000 to \$24,000,000, the people of Canada and the government of Canada must consider where that money is to come from, and as the Minister of Finance stated just before six o'clock our friends have been very unfair even within the last few hours. We were subjected to criticism because we did not further reduce taxation, but to-day hon. gentlemen opposite say we should involve the Dominion in an expenditure of not \$12,000,000 but \$24,000,000.

Mr. BENNETT: You could save it in the civil service in a year.

Mr. KING (Kootenay): My friends were in power many years, and they did not save it.

Mr. McQUARRIE: I would like to ask a question. What difference will it make to the people whether this money is collected by the Dominion or by the provinces?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): I tried to make that clear to my hon. friend a moment ago. The taxpayers of this country are situated in the various provinces and they have to pay the shot, but there is an advantage in involving the various provincial governments in this matter because they have the local knowledge and the local machinery for administration