

*Old Age Pensions*

granted the senior citizens of Canada rendered possible even the bare necessities of healthful existence to any old age pensioner obliged to live upon only that pension. In other words, we have never provided the bare necessities of healthful living for our elderly citizens in this country.

May I further remind Canadians of the tremendous amount of goods and services this nation is equipped right now to produce? In this connection may I cite once more the fact that in 1952 our production exceeded \$23 billion in value, equivalent to well over \$1,530 for every man, woman and child in this country. On the face of it, it looks utterly preposterous that we should not be able to give our senior citizens enough of those goods and services to provide a comfortable and satisfying standard of living.

May I finally remind Canadians that in any community of richly varied resources and richly varied products such as Canada has, what is physically possible could be made financially possible provided that a realistic financial system be employed, a financial system including an instrument appropriately resembling the Finance Act of 1923?

I have gone into this with some care in times past, and I hope to go into it more elaborately as days go by, for somehow or other it must be brought to the attention of the ordinary person of Canada that what is physically possible ought to be financially possible and if—

**An hon. Member:** C.C.F. policy.

**Mr. Blackmore:** —we are not rendering what is physically possible financially possible then something is radically wrong. In all probability, that something is the financial system.

**Mr. Ellis:** Economic system.

**Mr. Blackmore:** Financial system, because the financial system is the system which has to do with distributing goods.

May I point out that it is becoming almost monthly more and more difficult for any one of most individuals to provide for his own needs. We often hear people say, "When my old dad came to this country he went out into the wilderness and he hewed out a home, etc., etc." They quite forget that the conditions which obtained when "my old dad" came out to this country no longer prevail.

**An hon. Member:** Go west, young man, go west.

**Mr. Blackmore:** Now, if you go west you go into the sea. As a matter of fact, while we are on this matter, it is no longer possible for the ordinary person to go out into the

[Mr. Blackmore.]

wilds, take up land, and have a chance of making good. This means that conditions have completely changed.

Now, there are other reasons why it is next to impossible for people to provide for their own old age. Taxation is severe. "My old dad" did not have to exist under any such taxation structure as that levied by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) today. Living costs are high. Regulated standards of living are almost unavoidable. Jobs for those over 45 are becoming less and less available. I know of people who have walked the streets for days and days, and who have been refused even consideration after it was learned that they were 45 years of age. What conceivable chance have men and women under such conditions to provide for their own declining years?

Self employment is growing harder to provide. Such industries as laundering, sewing, knitting, the provision of milk, cream, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., all of which were occupations through which the elderly used to be able to eke out an existence, are now mainly non-available to our senior citizens. Practically every member in this house can recall the time when, if elderly people fell upon difficult days, they were able to take in washing or keep a cow and sell the milk, butter and cheese, or sell a few eggs, and get a few cents in that manner. In the average community today, no one of these industries is available to the elderly people. This is because machines have taken the place of these industries, and in many cases the keeping of a hog or a cow is forbidden by community laws.

All these matters and many others must be taken into consideration in any realistic approach to the problem of the elderly citizens of this country.

The problems of elderly people become yearly more pressing for several reasons. In the first place people are living longer—and we want them to live longer. We want them to attain the age of 125 or 150. The Bible commands:

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Canadians are keenly sensitive to that command. How can we be honouring our fathers and mothers when we are almost starving them to death or when we are forcing them to live for years with only one suit or in a hand-me-down overcoat? This matter requires attention, and requires effective redress. In the second place, families appear to be growing smaller. Just why our particular race should be cursed with the idea that they ought to eliminate themselves