

The motion for the third reading was negatived on the following division:

## OLD AGE PENSIONS BILL

### SECOND READING

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Hon. Mr. CALDER: Honourable senators, I have been asked by the right honourable leader on this side of the House (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen) to state that he was paired with the honourable leader on the other side (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) and that if he had been present and voted he would have voted against the motion.

Hon. Mr. MULLINS: Honourable senators, I was paired with the honourable member from North York (Hon. Sir Allen Aylesworth). Had I voted I should have voted against the motion.

Hon. Mr. GORDON: Honourable members, I was paired with the honourable senator from Victoria (Hon. Mr. Tobin). Otherwise I should have voted against the motion.

Hon. Mr. RAINVILLE: Honourable senators, I was paired with the honourable gentleman from Montarville (Hon. Mr. Beaubien). Otherwise I should have voted against the motion.

Hon. RAOUL DANDURAND moved the second reading of Bill 42, an Act to amend the Old Age Pensions Act.

He said: Honourable senators, the object of this Bill is to amend the Old Age Pensions Act to provide for the payment of pensions to blind persons who fulfil the conditions laid down in the measure.

I feel sure that every member of this House approves the granting of pensions to blind persons at an age earlier than 70 years, and that it is not necessary for me to speak at length in support of the motion. The position of those who suffer from physical handicaps of any kind has always made a strong appeal to public sympathy. This is especially so in the case of persons who are blind, because blindness, in addition to being a personal tragedy, is differentiated from other physical defects by its very serious economic consequences. Blind persons are no doubt able to produce work of a high quality in certain occupations, but on the whole it is difficult for them to attain the speed or efficiency which is possible for sighted persons, and their capacity for self-support is in most cases greatly diminished. I am not, however, attempting to stimulate interest in or arouse sympathy for the blind, because I assume that such sympathy and interest already exist in this House and in the country and that all that is necessary for me to do is to outline the Government's proposals to alleviate the lot of the blind who are in distress.

The Bill provides for the payment of pensions to the blind by means of amendment to the Old Age Pensions Act. The effect of this is that the provincial pension authorities and the machinery now set up for the administration of old age pensions will be utilized for the payment of pensions to the blind. Before pensions can be paid to the blind in any province it will be necessary for that province to enter into a new agreement with the Dominion for the payment of pensions to the aged and the blind in accordance with the Old Age Pensions Act as amended by the new Bill. If the Government of a province has not authority to enter into such an agreement with the Dominion for the payment of pensions to the blind, it will be necessary for the province to pass appropriate legislation. The applications for pensions will thus be made to the provincial pension authorities, who will grant or reject them in accordance with the provisions of our Act and regulations