

Mr. DUNNING: No, taking those over sixty and under seventy and adding the number of those over seventy.

Mr. HEAPS: The information I have clearly indicates that in those categories we had the number of people I mentioned, but I stand of course subject to correction.

Mr. DUNNING: Over two million?

Mr. HEAPS: Yes, 2,039,000. I am sorry if the figures are not correct, but I have them here exactly as I received them. Possibly I got the wrong set of figures.

Mr. DUNNING: I have two sets of figures by provinces, those between sixty and seventy and those over seventy, and in all there are just short of one million of these people.

Mr. HEAPS: I should think it would be strange if there were only a million in all those categories, because we have nearly four hundred thousand over seventy. My figures, from the bureau of statistics, show 397,000 people over the age of seventy. Surely if that is so, there must be a very much larger number between sixty and seventy.

Mr. DUNNING: Yes, 591,600.

Mr. HEAPS: That hardly sounds reasonable to me.

Mr. DUNNING: I have all the provinces separately.

Mr. HEAPS: Perhaps we can adjust this matter later on. Time is getting short, and I do not wish to dwell upon that aspect of the question; besides, if the minister is correct in his figure as to those between sixty and seventy it becomes so much easier for him to be a little more sympathetic this afternoon than otherwise he might have been.

Mr. DUNNING: I knew I was taking the risk that my hon. friend would make that reply, but I could not be more sympathetic than I am.

Mr. HEAPS: May I now deal with one aspect of the question concerning which I have received a large number of communications. Some people believe that if we reduce the pensionable age we may weaken what we commonly describe as filial responsibility. I have strong convictions on that point. I feel that when a mother or a father has reached old age, the child capable of maintaining or assisting in maintaining his aged parents in a state of decency and comfort, should do so without compulsion. I should not like to see anything done here by way of legislation which would weaken the respon-

[Mr. Heaps.]

sibility of the child towards the parents. Children are better able to maintain parents who are between the ages of sixty-five and seventy than they are when they, as well as the parents, reach an older age. In any measure brought before the house I should be quite prepared to support some provision by which proper attention would be given to the question of filial responsibility.

One of the tasks of the house should be to lighten the load of the older people. I think the time of the government would be well spent if it took into consideration more seriously than it did two years ago the question of reducing the pensionable age. I recall the words of the Prime Minister at the time the government was about to take office. On October 14, immediately after the election results were known, he made the following statement:

The struggle for the rights of the people, will, in the realms of economic liberty and security, be carried on as never before. Poverty and adversity, want and misery are enemies which Liberalism will seek to banish from our land.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. HEAPS: I am glad to hear some hon. members say "Hear, hear." I should like to have that expression of concurrence in the sentiments of the Prime Minister, as he stated them immediately after the election, put into concrete action. This is the third session of the present parliament. If this parliament runs the usual length there will be one more session. Up to this time, in these three sessions, with one exception—pensions for the blind—no action which would give the people a greater sense of economic security than they had at the time the statement of the Prime Minister was made can be credited to the government.

I am one who wants to see the purpose behind that statement carried out. I believe the government could do nothing better than to give concurrence to the resolution I have presented, in which I ask the house to do exactly what was promised by the present Prime Minister. It would bring about a sense of security to the old people in Canada. The letters I have received, the majority of which, strange as it may seem, come from rural centres, are most pathetic. They urge that something be done for the older people. We in Canada are lagging behind all English-speaking countries in our activities in respect to bettering the social and economic lot of the common people. I believe—and the facts prove it—that so far as looking after the well-being of our people is concerned, we are the most backward of any English-speaking part