

Mr. BRYCE: I wish to ask the minister a question about the franchises which the film board issue to different people in the country. I am talking about a section of my own constituency, namely, the district of Stonewall. In this district they have given the franchise to the gentleman who runs the theatre in Stonewall, and the ladies' organizations and the farm organizations cannot participate in the benefits of the film board films. I have taken this matter up with the minister and nothing has been done about it. I want to see something done about it, so that these organizations can have the use of the films which are produced by the film board. I do not mean the "March of Time", or any of these other films that are shown in the picture theatres. I am speaking of the films which are of an educational nature, films on health and that sort of thing which are suitable for farm folks.

Hon. J. J. McCANN (Acting Minister of National Health and Welfare): The wrong item was called. We shall have the film board estimates after these. We want to deal with the health side first.

Item stands.

Welfare branch—

799. Old age pensions (including pensions to the blind)—administration—further amount required, \$6,285.

Mr. NICHOLSON: Will the minister make a statement on government policy regarding what has developed since the old age pension item was before the house the last time. Hon. members will recall that the collapse of the dominion-provincial conference made it impossible for arrangements to be worked out in detail so that pensions could be made available at an earlier age and in a more generous amount. At that time the minister was not in a position to indicate just what the future plans of the government might be. Several weeks have passed since the matter was before the house. Can the minister indicate just what has to be done to make it possible for the people in the old age pension bracket to meet the rising costs of living which are prevalent all across the country?

Mr. McCANN: I might explain that this additional amount of \$6,000 odd is required to pay the travelling expenses of the members of the inter-provincial body in connection with a meeting arranged for September, 1946, estimated at \$4,000; also to provide an additional amount of \$2,000 to pay travelling expenses of the members of the old age pensions division in connection with the examination of provincial old age pension records. There has been a considerable increase in the number of new cases, and, in addition, increases as a

[Mr. Macdonnell.]

result of orders in council passed under the authority of the War Measures Act. The increases are shown by the following items.

With reference to the question by the hon. gentleman which was what arrangements have been made so far as the old age pensions go to meet the increased cost of living, I cannot give him a positive answer, but I shall bring the matter to the attention of the officials. I am taking these estimates only in the absence of the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. REID: At this late hour I am reluctant to bring any special case before the committee, but since there is not any likelihood of a dominion-provincial conference being called at this late hour, I say that a definite change is required in the old age pension regulations, particularly in the light of a case which came to my attention just a few days ago. This is the case of a man eighty-two years of age who went to visit his daughter in the United States, and an irresponsible driver of a car hit him on one of the streets in a city of that country and fractured his skull. He was taken to a hospital. After being in the hospital for sixty days, the doctor advised him that he had better stay in the home of his daughter and not return home. Lo and behold! on his return home he found that he could not get old age pension because he had been outside the country a certain number of days. Here is a man who has been in the country since 1885. He decides to visit his daughter and, through no fault of his own, he meets with an accident. Copies of the certificates were sent to him and also a copy of the ruling of the board in Vancouver which tells him that, according to the regulations of the Old Age Pensions Act, he cannot come under the provisions of that act until June, 1948. Since he is now eighty-three, he has a slim chance of ever getting the old age pension, because he has passed the allotted span by some years. I suggest to the minister that he take note of the case and, when the provinces meet with the dominion, regulations of this kind be amended. It seems to me that there is great injustice in the case I have stated.

The question I wish to ask the minister is this. Have representations been made to the various provincial governments, who seemed willing to accept the offers put forward by the dominion government in regard to old age pensions? We know there are two provinces that have remained aloof, but I understand there are some provinces that are ready to accept at least a part of the social legislation outlined by the dominion, and I am asking, therefore, whether the minister