

complaining about it, made a change in the regulation with respect to the valuation of land. Formerly it was held, indeed it is now held, that a person's income from land should be based on five per cent of the value of that land, and the regulation as originally drawn took the assessed value as the basis of valuation. The dominion government, with the consent of the provinces, and, I believe, actuated by some condition that arose in Ontario, changed it so that it would read that the valuation of the land would be either the assessed value or the market value, whichever was considered to be more equitable. That was done under the present Minister of Labour and I find no fault with it, but in British Columbia they have been continuing to take the assessed value, which in some instances was about five times the real value, with the result that some old person has been done out of a pension. Generally speaking, the assessed value of land in British Columbia, especially in the country, is grossly in excess of the market value. In the particular cases I took up with the authorities there I pointed out that the government had changed the regulation so that whichever value was found to be the more equitable should be used as the basis. I demanded that the valuation be made on the market value and the answer I received was no; they intended to adhere to the assessed value. In my opinion they did so entirely because it saved them trouble. They do not make any investigation into the real market value; all they do is to take the assessed value and they say it is their intention to abide by that. The result is that the particular persons I have in mind are deprived of a pension to this day in consequence of the ruling of the local administration board. And when I put it up to them that the regulation, having the force of law, distinctly made it optional whether the assessed value or the market value should be taken, according to which was the more equitable, they fell back on the ridiculous assertion that I was impugning the integrity of the assessors, because they were sworn to do justice. They declared that they were satisfied that the assessed value must be the correct market value, which of course is the purest nonsense, because it is well known to everyone in British Columbia, that the market value especially at the present time, is far below the assessed value.

That is only one illustration of the maladministration—I cannot use any other word—by which the regulations are twisted to do injustice and to deprive people of the pension to which they are entitled by law.

[Mr. Neill.]

The day does not seem to have been a happy one when they have not been able to refuse someone a pension or to deprive him of it for a period of time. The old regulations laid down the rule that when a man or woman was granted a pension it should date back to the date of the application if they were qualified. Now that has been changed and it dates only from the time the officials make up their minds that the pensioner is entitled. And they can drag it on for a year or two years and sometimes three years, and they think their time and energies have been well spent when some poor old person has been kept out of that which at last they reluctantly grant after making investigations and inquiries as to what some distant relation's residence is or what that person's income was during a certain year.

There is another matter of which the department is cognizant. I have discussed it before but I take this opportunity to bring it up again. There is a beautiful theory in the British Columbia board that children can and ought to support their parents, regardless of the estate, means or ability of the children to do so. I have in my files case after case where I have been told in British Columbia, "We will not grant a pension to the person for whom you intercede until that person sues the children." One case was that of a man, and they said: He has a son who is a single man and he can and should be able to support his parents; you have the father sue the son before we will do anything. I went and interviewed the parties. The father was an old man and was getting \$5 a month relief, working it out on the roads. The son was living in a shack about six feet square and he was also on relief, getting \$5 a month and working it out on the roads; that was all he had to live on. That was the son the father was supposed to sue so as to get an order of the court stating that the son could or could not help the old man, before any justice would be done to the father. That is the sort of way in which the regulation is enforced, taking advantage, I think wrongly, of the change made by the minister in the regulations by which certain language is used which states that in deciding what a man's income is, they shall take into consideration any income that he may be likely or expected to receive, or words to that effect. These officials out in British Columbia have twisted that to mean any possible sum he may or may not receive. For instance, they say that the father is entitled to "expect" that his child shall support him, because in British Columbia there is a parents' maintenance act