

not go very deep. However, murmurs of it reached Ottawa. The same thing happened in Quebec, in the western provinces and in the maritime provinces. The hour had come when the dominion government was in duty bound to appoint a commission which would visit the various provinces and hear the grievances of each part of the country presented in an orderly manner. That was not all. The out-and-out advocates of local autonomy who, in many cases, aimed at the destruction of national life, would find themselves there in a forum where they necessarily had to be impartial and reasonable. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the moment they appear before the Rowell commission their statements are given wide publicity from one end of the country to the other, and any false reasoning on their part subjects them to ridicule. Did we not see last autumn alliances formed in some parts of the country with the object of combating the actions of the federal government? I repeat, the present administration deserves the congratulations of the Canadian people for having created the Rowell commission which is seeking the solution of the serious problems now facing this country.

The hon. member for Verdun deemed it logical—I shall not discuss the point—to seek from a national lottery the money required to lower the age limit for old-age pensions. He alluded to a bill to this effect submitted by a Montreal city member and to the problem that will be discussed on the second reading of this bill. Mr. Speaker, it would take at least fifty lotteries to solve all the financial problems with which the country is faced and to supply the funds required for all the social institutions we should like to establish in Canada, and I would not be in favour of establishing lotteries on so large a scale.

(Text) No one could have any quarrel with the resolution. Generally speaking, no one has any quarrel with the solution of the old age pension problem. Providing for the old people was a necessity which was perhaps long overdue. But first things must come first and, Mr. Speaker, this is the forum in which we should speak our own minds sincerely and honestly. I state deliberately that first of all, in its full integrity, we must apply the present old age pension system.

I could refer to dozens of cases, and give positive facts showing a misuse of old age pensions. I shall cite one typical case. Prior to 1930 a farmer from a point north of Cochrane—if necessary I shall give the name—asked me if he would get an old age pension. I said that he would not. I told him he could not get it and he was not entitled to it because he was a well-to-do farmer and

could live on his income. I added that his son owed obligations to him, and that as a result he and his wife would be looked after for the rest of their days. But my opponent promised the man that if he would vote for him the pension would be given—and he got it. I say that man should not have received a pension.

We have had several of those cases. The provincial government in Ontario sent out a questionnaire to pensioners in that province, asking the exact facts in each case. In some instances it appears that the pension worked to the detriment of the people who received it. I do not wish to be misquoted, and hasten to state that I am absolutely in favour of the principle of old age pensions; but I must repeat that there is so much abuse of the system now in use that I am in favour of applying the principle universally, and giving the old age pension to all persons over seventy years. That would do away with many of the false statements and the injustices which now exist. If investigations were made in connection with some applications which have been granted, some people would find themselves in gaol, and against the principle of the act. These are conditions which we must avoid. We must have the interest not only of parliament, but of the people who receive money from a provincial or federal treasury. I have seen so many strange things going on in that regard that in order to improve our Canadian life, I would be in favour of universal application of old age pensions.

Possibly I should point out some of the pertinent facts. There can be no doubt in the mind of any parliamentarian, whether he be in a provincial or a federal house, that conditions are changing rapidly; that there are evolutionary changes in many respects, and that there are more and more social activities in the different provinces. May I set out some of the figures supplied for the year 1936, indicating social improvement activities. In Ontario, where old age pensions, mothers' allowances and other matters of the kind are administered by the Department of Public Welfare, 120,000 Ontarians look to that department for their monthly cheques. I speak only of provincial activities, and I do not include in these figures pensions given by the federal and the provincial governments to civil servants. I do not include pensions given to veterans from the federal treasury, but speak only of the provincial field. So when someone says we are not running very fast, I say that we are walking very steadily, at least in some directions.

In 1936 there were in Ontario more than 56,000 old age pensioners, and the number is