

done in Canada. Take, for instance, the conditions in very many places in the eastern part of Canada; where are the young men? The east in Canada has been the fruitful nursery not only for our own western lands but for other nations, unfortunately. Is there anything more pathetic than to find the old man and woman living alone on a small farm somewhere in eastern Canada unable to work, and, as frequently occurs, having to make some arrangement with some third party in order to obtain a guarantee that they will get their bed and board until the time comes to close their eyes? The children are so far away that it is impossible to reach them or to secure that assistance from them which might otherwise be available. Take again another pathetic case. One of the great problems in Canada to-day is the problem of the migration from the farm to the town. With our advance industrially there has gone on the depopulation of the farming districts which have been the recruiting ground in order to give us the men who work in the factories and mines. There is nothing more pathetic than to see the old man and the old lady left upon the farm by the boy who has gone to get work in the city, following him or a daughter there and finding themselves as isolated almost as if they were living on the desert, having no touch with the community in which they live and dependent upon the assistance which may be rendered by the son or daughter. Then again, the son bids farewell to the farm and goes away, and these people are left stranded with perhaps a little money, but not enough to maintain themselves under their own roof tree. These are instances of numerous cases which exist all over the country and particularly in eastern Canada where the intervention of the state is absolutely necessary not only in the interest of these people but in the interest of Canada.

In the west the optimism of the people is great as a result of the continuous immigration which is going there. The efforts of the nation are being put forth in order to solve the transportation problem by railway extension, and tremendous expenditures of money have been going on all over that country. While the people keep going there and while this money is being spent throughout the country of course they are optimists and splendid optimism it is, but this country is in its most infantile stage as far as development and social problems are concerned, and day by day there are developing the conditions under which the older men in that land will very properly feel that there ought to be some consideration of the problem of how those essential things which are demanded, and which exist in every country

Mr. MACDONALD.

which has a pride in its people, can and should be provided by the state because all the other sources are inadequate.

The Minister of Finance told us that one of the things to be considered in Canada was that there was no public agitation on this question. Well, we have been having a strenuous life in Canada for the past ten years; in the east and the west the growth of our country has been marvellous, and doubtless our people have not stopped to consider the solution of these social problems. But, this question has nevertheless been discussed in a great many parts of the country. In my own province where a great number of people have been engaged for years in the coal mining industry, and where we have very intelligent labour organizations the question has been seriously considered and has formed matter for discussion in various election campaigns. That it has not been much discussed in the press is not an indication that there is no public opinion on the question, although of course as the hon. member (Mr. Verville) says, public opinion is largely formed by the press of a country. And, the reason why there is not more public opinion on this question is because our public men have not been to the fore in placing before our people the importance of dealing with it, as the motherland, as New Zealand, and as many of the other world nations have done. I do not think the Minister of Finance presented a strong argument when he suggested that it might not be wise to advertise that there were conditions in Canada which rendered old age pensions necessary. Everybody knows that people grow old in Canada as elsewhere, and the fortune-seeker who comes here and thinks that he can get everything he desires by simply landing on our shores must of course become disillusioned. Possibly, those who come to Canada imbued with such an idea never think of what will happen when they do grow old, or perhaps they dream that old age will not overtake them. No one will seriously contend that there never will be a condition in Canada which will free our people from the penalties which invariably follow old age in every land, and, Sir, while we are laying strong and firm the foundation stone of our great future along industrial lines, every patriot must believe that to be really great we must as well make social progress in a direction advantageous for our people. It becomes, in my opinion, very important for the well-being of the people of Canada that we should create here a system similar to that which obtains elsewhere in providing for our aged poor. I trust that the fullest information may be gathered by the committee which has been agreed to by the Minister of Finance as regards the working of this system in all countries,