

should not be sufficient to induce people to retire, I would have no objection and in fact would welcome it if the Minister of Finance would increase that pension to an amount which would be sufficient to induce people to retire.

Now we come to our youth problem, which is bound up with this question to a certain extent. The youth question cannot be ignored; for to-day we have the youth of our country walking the streets or with very little to do. To me it seems illogical and absurd to have young men in their late teens and their twenties walking the streets while our older people are engaged in industry, or are unable to perform the duties of the positions they hold. The question of incapacity, which I have raised, is a very important one and cannot be ignored. When the minister considers the cost of any pension scheme he cannot figure it entirely on the basis of mere dollars and cents. There is also a credit side of the picture. At the present time, persons of sixty-five to seventy years of age who probably would come under a pension scheme, if they are not in a position to earn their own livelihood, are being maintained by someone else. If their own relatives or friends are not in a position to do so then these people become the recipients of public relief. It does occur to me that when a man or a woman who has lived in this dominion for twenty, thirty or forty years, and has given the best years of his or her life in developing and building up the country, reaches old age, he or she should be entitled to some form of recognition from the country for the services that have been rendered. I believe that when the average person, be he a mechanic in any sphere of activity or be he a man who works in a store or a warehouse, has given thirty or forty years of his life in devoted service to his country he is just as much entitled to a pension as is the soldier in the army or the judge who sits on the bench. I think there should be recognition of the services that have been rendered, though they may have been rendered in very different capacities.

Mr. BAKER: I do not want to interrupt my hon. friend, but the act does not read that way. A man need be in Canada only twenty years, and on reaching the age of seventy he can get a pension. In my opinion that is the one weak point in the act.

Mr. HEAPS: When a person reaches the age of sixty-five or seventy he has probably worked very hard for perhaps thirty or forty years.

Mr. BAKER: According to the act as it stands now, a man could have come from Germany at the age of forty-nine years and eleven months and upon reaching seventy he is eligible for an old age pension, although he gave the best of his life to Germany. I took exception to that when the act was introduced.

Mr. HEAPS: I think there are similar provisions in every old age pension act in the world, including those of this country and of Great Britain. It is the case, so far as I know, wherever you have an old age pension act in force.

The problem of old age is becoming an extremely serious one, because I think it is recognized that through advances in medical science and scientific research people to-day have a greater life expectancy than they had a few generations ago. The average expectancy of life is now approximately fifty-eight years, which is about twenty years more than it was a few generations ago. I have figures which show that at the present time there are in Canada more than two million persons of the age of sixty and over, which means that approximately twenty per cent of our total population come within that category. That means that the problem of old age is becoming even more important than the question of unemployment. A man who reaches the age of sixty and becomes unemployed finds it extremely difficult to obtain employment. In fact men are sometimes laid off when they have reached the age of fifty, because it is considered that even then they are too old. A man of sixty or sixty-five has absolutely no opportunity of obtaining employment.

Mr. DUNNING: I think my hon. friend's figure of two million must be wrong. I do not want to interrupt him, but I do not want him to base his argument upon a false premise.

Mr. HEAPS: I may say that I obtained my figures very recently from the bureau of statistics. I accepted them over the phone. I may have got them incorrectly.

Mr. DUNNING: Will my hon. friend permit me to interrupt for a moment? I have here the figures by provinces of the number of persons over sixty but under seventy. The aggregate of those in the whole dominion is 591,600. Then I have the number of persons seventy years of age and over, which is 396,900. Adding those figures it will be seen that at the present time in the Dominion of Canada there are less than one million persons over sixty years of age.

Mr. HEAPS: Over sixty and under seventy?