

to make. The member for Rosedale (Mr. Jackman) tried to discuss the question of salary and motor car allowance but was ruled out of order. No one else said anything on the subject, nor did I, but the hon. member made a personal reference to myself to the effect that he had heard that I, that is the Minister of Finance, do not accept the motor car allowance. I do not want any misunderstanding about that. I do not wish to have my silence taken as admitting that it is true. I accept the same monthly cheques that all my colleagues accept, which are made up on the basis of \$2,000 a year.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: On the question of old age pensions, it is quite evident from what has been said that every member in this house will support any proper measure of reform. I do not think there is any single thing which does more to condemn an administration than the fact that it does not adequately take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. An increase in the pension is imperative, particularly where people in their old age cannot afford necessary medical treatment. The first charge on the wealth produced in any state ought to be to take care of those who are either too young and helpless or too old and helpless to take care of themselves. The old age pension scheme should be brought up to date. I support fully the plea of the hon. member for Renfrew South (Mr. McCann) that something be done about it. The government have power under the order in council to take the necessary action, where medical attention is needed. The paltry sum of \$20 or \$25 may enable people in some areas to eke out an existence, but when people reach the age of 70 and find that they have to spend \$10 or \$12 or \$15 on medical services, the outlook is hopeless.

Mr. MacNICOL: In Ontario old age pensioners and those receiving mother's allowance are given medical attention.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: That is excellent. Why should the practice not be uniform? I am not going to prolong the discussion, but I urge upon the minister that he try to persuade the cabinet to make the system uniform, so that those who are receiving the pension may get medical attention when they need it.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The Old Age Pension Act, like a good many of our other concepts to-day, was framed from the point of view of an age of scarcity. We have an age of scarcity complex. People have not come fully to realize the implications of the fact that since 1928 we have entered the period when the world can produce more than it can

[Mr. Isley.]

consume. This country can produce more than it can consume. That being so, there is no conceivable excuse for allowing anyone in the country to suffer from lack of food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, amusement, culture or any of these things. We need to bring our old age pension scheme up to date from one end of the country to the other. Twenty dollars a month never was high enough. All one needs to do is to reflect on the position in which an elderly person is placed who has to maintain an independent establishment.

Last winter I had an experience which left on my mind an impression that will never be erased. In a certain city, which I will not name, there were a number of elderly men over sixty-five years of age. These poor old men had no relatives, they were not married, they had no family connections of any kind. There were six of them in a little shack. They had got together and agreed to contribute to pay the rent and buy the fuel, and in this way they were able to carry on. I wondered time and again after I saw them what would have been the position of any one of these luckless men if he had not been able to find the other five, if he had had to establish himself independently. All we need to do is to think how far \$20 a month can go towards paying rent and buying food and clothing and providing medical attention, a little culture, and a little bit of amusement once in a while. Are our elderly people to be denied the privilege of going to an occasional picture show at a time of life when they need some comfort? We have only to name the various things which old people need to see how pathetic the meagreness of \$20 a month is.

The age is altogether too high. To set the age limit at 70 is almost to render the pension inaccessible to the ordinary person whose span, according to the scriptures, is supposed to be three score years and ten. True, a great many people reach the age of 70, but a great many others do not, and to set the age at 70 is to deny a large number of people who have helped to build up the country the privilege of having a little comfort in return for their contribution to society. The age, I repeat, is too high.

Once more may I remind the committee that this is an age of abundance. That fact alone has changed the whole situation with respect to aged people. This is a young man's war. This is a young man's age. When a man reaches the age of fifty he is under a serious handicap in an attempt to get work in any kind of activity. Employers want young men. They demand young men. Take agriculture as an example; fifty years