

can apply to the common people the benefits of technical education in a more diffusive way. In the meantime, all over this land there are found men who are being told that they are too old to work even though their age has not impaired their physical powers to such an extent as to prevent them from engaging in certain kinds of manual labour.

And after all, there is that penalty which attaches to men who, of necessity, have not adapted themselves to the newer conditions of life and that is the sentence meted out to them. It is in the interest of the state that the most ideal conditions possible should prevail and if you cannot have them ideal, conditions as close to that as you can get them should exist for older people. What are these conditions? They are, first, personal comfort. The very least that any one who has come to the age of 65 or older should demand inherently, supposing he has done the best he could in his own particular sphere, is that he should have an element of personal comfort which is a condition of things essential to all persons at that time of life. Then, persons who have reached this age ought to be able to have some idea of independence in their actions and thoughts. These are two essentials. It seems to me that where they do not exist, as unquestionably they do not exist in this or any other land, the least that the state can do is to provide them to the best of its ability in order to ensure that its best citizens, because from the cottage homes of England and Canada sprang in the days that are gone and are springing to-day men and women who are the best citizens of our country, may enjoy in the declining years of their lives that personal comfort and independence to which they are entitled. The very least that the state can be expected to do is to provide those conditions of comfort and independence which do not exist to-day for people who have reached the time of life of which I have spoken.

How are these conditions of comfort and independence to be obtained outside of the intervention of the state? They may be obtained by the accumulation of years of savings. I have pointed out that no matter how thrifty people may be their accumulations acquired under normal conditions and with exceptional care might be swept away by a period of illness or misfortune which might destroy the little holdings that had been got together. Then, there is the other source—the source of present earnings—the amount of money that a person of 65 or over could earn by engaging in some occupation. The impairment of the value of the labour of a man of that age is something that

I have already referred to. But, where you have present earnings and where you have the exceptional case in which these earnings are sufficient, the intervention of the state is not required and it is not supposed that the old age pension system would apply except with such limitations as would guarantee its operation only in such cases as those in which this source of revenue did not exist. Then, there is the third source of assistance to aged people—their children, a common source of help everywhere, be it said to the honour of the men of our race, as previous speakers upon this question have remarked. It is a gratifying thing to know that in Canada this assistance is freely rendered and that love of parents is a characteristic which exists to a very great degree among our people.

But, look at the impossibility of such assistance being absolute in its character. Take the man and woman who have brought up a family in an industrial centre, or in any condition of life; the young people have grown up, gone out and married and formed families of their own. Here, the proposition is put forth sometimes that you should not have an old age pension system because the young will look after the old. Thus the doctrine of individualism would apply. That is all very fine to theorize about, but any one who has lived close to industrial centres knows how impossible it is to get rid of the necessity for the intervention of the state upon the theory that the children must look after their fathers and mothers. The problem becomes a successive one to be solved by the son or daughter just as it was in the case of the father. Is there anything more humiliating, after all, than to see an old man or old woman at the eventide of life absolutely dependent, without any independence or freedom of action, sitting perhaps at the fireside of the son, who feels it the greatest possible imposition no matter how strong may be his desire to perform the onerous duty of fulfilling the obligation which rests upon the child towards its parents. These are some of the reasons why we are told in some quarters that the state should not interfere.

To my mind these sources which I have enumerated are all inadequate. No matter how satisfactory the individual conditions may be amongst the poorer classes in different parts of the country, after all you have a great percentage of the people who have sprung from those who are not rich and for whom the necessary comforts of life can only be obtained by the intervention of the state in some such way as is being done in these other countries to which I have referred, and as ought to be