

Can that be done? Is that possible within the limits of the financial power we have demonstrated that we possess? This is one thing which concerns me when I think of the Department of Finance and the old age pensioners. If to-day we cannot take care of the war needs of the old age pensioners, how are we to take care of the reconstruction programme that will be just as difficult and just as hard to manage as has been the war problem through which we have passed? If that is to be the attitude toward the recovery and reconstruction programme, then my fear is that we have lost the peace before we have signed the armistice. And it must then be the duty of this parliament to change the attitude of the Department of Finance.

Let me say, in conclusion, that for too long have men who think in terms of money had control of the bridge of the ship of state. The time has come when the statesmen, the engineers, the architects, the sociologists, the men who plan the life of the community shall be the captains on the bridge of that ship of state, and shall give their orders to the Department of Finance to provide the fuel.

I am not speaking to-night because I have any hope that this parliament will do anything about this matter. But I do know that provincial premiers from one end of Canada to the other are coming here. They are organizing now to come here, and among the problems they will discuss will be the problem of old age pensions. It is my hope that at the coming session of parliament, as a result of this conference, Canada will be able to receive from this government and from parliament, as a part of a new social security programme, an old age pension which will place us in the forefront of the nations of the world in respect of the care and consideration we are going to give to those who have reached the eventide of life in a condition of need, and a place where they need the help of the state.

Mr. ILSLEY: Mr. Chairman, I shall be brief, because I am as anxious as anyone that we should conclude at the earliest possible moment. The hon. member made a strong argument for a constitutional amendment—and that was the most of what he said. He referred to the attitude and statements of the Prime Minister through the years, and he cited a number of speeches the Prime Minister had made to the public and to parliament. As I followed those speeches, it appeared to me that they were all consistent with the view that there should be a constitutional amendment placing this subject within the jurisdiction of

the federal parliament. I wish to say that I, myself, am in favour of old age pensions being within the jurisdiction of the dominion parliament; and I look forward to the day when there will be in force in Canada a system of contributory old age pensions, along the lines recommended by the Beveridge report, or something of that kind, and administered on a nation-wide scale by this parliament.

When my hon. friend attacks either the Minister of Finance or the Department of Finance, or both, for their unsocial attitude, he is very wide of the mark, because I am merely taking the jurisdictional position as I find it. I never have made any argument against the dominion parliament's procuring the jurisdiction. I have simply acknowledged a jurisdictional fact, and that is that, as matters stand to-day, this is primarily the responsibility of the provinces. That is what I said, and that is all I said.

I have said that I could not understand why, that being the case, the provinces should not assume that responsibility. That was what I said in my speech in November of 1941. Nevertheless I did say in that speech that if all or substantially all of the provinces would make representations in favour of an amendment to the Old Age Pensions Act by raising the maximum pension, consideration would be given to those representations. They have been making such representations, one by one, ever since.

Mr. McGEER: They have all made them now.

Mr. ILSLEY: I said that this morning.

Mr. McGEER: Why have they not got results?

Mr. ILSLEY: The representations of Quebec were made on July 12, and those of Prince Edward Island have just been made. I thought I was justified, and the government thought it was quite justified in standing on the position it took in 1941, particularly as many of the provinces have been paying supplementary allowances. I include in that statement the province of British Columbia, which has been paying \$25 instead of \$20. And that applies to Alberta as well.

Mr. McGEER: And Saskatchewan and Manitoba agreed to give five, and they paid only twenty-five per cent of it.

Mr. ILSLEY: Well, I am not going to carry on an argument on the question as to whether or not there should be an amendment to the constitution. That is a different matter. The speech the hon. gentleman made to-night